PHILOSOPHY FOR THE LAYMAN

THE NEW MORALITY

Durant Drake

QY40 13741
D761
Drake
AUTHOR
New morality
TITLE
DATE DUE | BORROWER'S NAME
APR 11 '69 GORDON CLANTON GTU
CBGTU

40
61
13741

Library of the
Church Divinity School
of the Pacific

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2026

https://archive.org/details/newmorality0000dura_f2b2

Philosophy for the Layman Series

Series Editor, ROY WOOD SELLARS, Ph.D.
Professor of Philosophy
in the University of Michigan

THE NEW MORALITY

Philosophy for the Layman Series

THE NEW MORALITY
By DURANT DRAKE

WHAT IS THE MIND?
By GEORGE THOMAS WHITE PATRICK

RELIGION COMING OF AGE
By ROY WOOD SELLARS

THE NEW MORALITY

OR

The Advocacy of Dictatorship by Bureaucracy

BY

DURANT DRAKE

PROFESSOR OF PHILOSOPHY AT VASSAR COLLEGE

AUTHOR OF "PROBLEMS OF CONDUCT," "AMERICA FACES THE FUTURE," "SHALL WE STAND BY THE CHURCH?", ETC.

New York

THE MACMILLAN COMPANY

1929

All rights reserved

M
261
.197
1928

COPYRIGHT, 1928,
BY THE MACMILLAN COMPANY.

Set up and electrotyped.
Published September, 1928.
Reprinted April, 1929

QV40
D761

SET UP BY BROWN BROTHERS LINOTYPERS
PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
BY THE FERRIS PRINTING COMPANY

PREFACE

By "the new morality" I mean the morality which, basing itself solidly upon observation of the *results* of conduct, consciously aims to secure the maximum of attainable happiness for mankind. It goes back, to be sure, to Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle; but it has never been espoused by more than a very small minority. What was the "old morality" in the days of Socrates was, in its concrete precepts, very different from the prevalent morality of today; but it was like the traditional, respectable morality of today in being dogmatic, formalistic, haphazard, and blind. The dominant moral codes throughout human history have been based upon authority, not upon a study of the natural consequences of acts; and though they have often embodied profound intuitions and served many useful purposes, they have had no clear realization of what makes morality really worthy of our allegiance. At last, however, a scientific, experimental attitude toward morals is becoming diffused among the more educated classes, and we seem to be at the dawn of an age which will judge conduct by its observable results.

The conservatives, who can conceive of no other moral standards than those which they have followed, are naturally alarmed.

> Youth is questioning the validity of our entire system of ethics. . . . Our ethics and their old sanctions are already in dissolution. . . . What the younger generation and their children may be called upon to do may be to make

13741

> the most rapid, far-reaching, and consciously intelligent readjustment of ethical ideas to altered social structure that the race has ever been called upon to make. . . . They have inherited, perhaps, the biggest mess and biggest problem that was ever bequeathed by one generation to another.[1]

Such statements as these are to be heard on every side. And they are hardly exaggerated. We are at one of those turning-points in human history at which stability and complacent assurance are giving way to criticism and change. The same questioning and contriving spirit that has developed with amazing speed our material civilization is being turned upon morals.

It is high time. We have made vast progress in developing material devices for man's comfort and security, but we lag in our adjustment of conduct to our complex social situations. We have, indeed, been making rather a bad mess of things, with our divisive sectarianisms and nationalisms, our stubborn dogmatisms, our commercialized vices, our menacing trinity of privilege, profiteering, and propaganda, our ghastly war that murdered directly or indirectly forty million people and set back civilization by a generation. The most cursory observation shows that there is an enormous amount of injustice and misery in the world which could be eradicated by the adoption of more intelligent habits of behaviour.

Such a reorientation of our morals will not turn us into saints. Selfishness and blind passion will be eternal enemies of the good life. But to see clearly what are the major sins of our day is to take the first step towards curing them. The

[1] James Truslow Adams, in *The Atlantic Monthly*, vol. 138, pp. 577-583; November, 1926.

world is suffering not so much from waywardness as from lack of a clear vision of what is right and wrong. The conscience of our excellent forefathers is not adequate for today; we must develop a conscience with respect to the new situations in which our developing civilization has involved us. Business men, virtuous in their family life, and of sincere piety, have not known how to be moral towards their employees, their rivals or their public; as a people we do not know clearly how to be moral in our politics or our international relations. There is much that is admirable in generally accepted moral codes. But we need a new moral thoughtfulness; we must create a better technique for securing the common good.

Since the War I have been in practically every European country, including Russia; and I have learned much by watching the development of morals in these other lands. The discussion which follows is phrased for the most part in terms of American situations, since the greater number of its readers will presumably be Americans. But most of the problems discussed are, or presently will be, world-wide problems. And the European or Asiatic reader will find here not only a frank criticism of contemporary American morals, but a discussion which bears almost equally upon present or impending situations in his own fatherland.

Many of the problems here discussed are treated at greater length, or from a different angle, in some of my earlier books: *Problems of Conduct* (Revised ed., 1920), *Shall We Stand by the Church?* (1920), *America Faces the Future* (1922). The discussion here, because of its brevity, and the wide field which it surveys, necessarily omits a consideration of many arguments which may seem to the reader important. Each of the situations to which a few pages are given would

require a volume for adequate treatment. But the average reader would not read those volumes. Or at least, he must first be made to feel the gravity of the problems and the irrationality of much current behaviour. This little book is meant to be a stimulus to further thinking and observation, rather than a final judgment upon any issue; it will have served its purpose if it leads readers here and there to question their previous opinions—opinions absorbed probably from parents, neighbours, newspapers, parsons, or heaven knows whom, to make the attempt to base their moral judgments upon a study of the results of conduct, and, as the fundamental thing, to develop a passionate interest in helping to win a wider, securer, and more lasting happiness for men.

CONTENTS

PART ONE

THE OLD MORALITY AND THE NEW

CHAPTER		PAGE
I.	SUPERNATURAL MORALITY	3
	The Animal Origin of Morality	3
	The Supposed Supernatural Origin of Morality	4
	The Inadequacy of Supernatural Morality	6
	Quasi-Supernaturalistic Moralists	10
II.	MORAL SKEPTICISM	13
	The Revolt Against Authority	13
	Are *Right* and *Wrong* Purely Conventional Terms?	15
	The Folly of Moral Skepticism	18
III.	NATURAL MORALITY	23
	What Morality Is	23
	Some Other Definitions of Morality	26
	Some Objections to Happiness as the End	31
IV.	THE IRKSOMENESS OF DUTY	36
	Why is Duty Irksome?	36
	The Apotheosis of Duty	38
	Why Not Be Selfish?	42
V.	FROM PURITANISM TO FREUD	47
	The Attitude of Puritanism	47
	The Exposé of Puritanism	51
	Is Suppression of Desires Always Bad?	55

CONTENTS

PART TWO

SOME QUESTIONABLE ASPECTS OF CURRENT MORALITY

CHAPTER		PAGE
VI.	SELF-INDULGENCE AND LUXURY	63
	The Pursuit of Personal Happiness	63
	When Is Self-indulgence Wrong?	67
	Is Luxury Morally Justifiable?	70
VII.	LAWLESSNESS AND CRIME	75
	Under What Circumstances Is It Right to Break a Law?	75
	Is It Ever Right to Use Violence to Attain an End?	78
	Is There a Crime-wave?	85
	How Can We Diminish Lawlessness?	88
VIII.	INTOXICATION AND BOOTLEGGING	93
	The Case For Prohibition	94
	The Case Against Prohibition	98
	What Is Our Present Duty?	105
IX.	MARITAL FAILURES	112
	Is Divorce an Evil or a Cure?	112
	What Should the State Do About Divorce?	116
	What Should We Do to Improve Marriage?	122
X.	IRRESPONSIBLE PARENTHOOD	127
	Should We Insist Upon Education for Parenthood?	127
	Have All Married People a Right to be Parents?	129
	How Can We Control Birth-Control?	133
	May Women Let Careers Interfere with Motherhood?	139
XI.	CORRUPT POLITICS	146
	What Is "Corruption" in Politics?	146
	Are We Drifting Into a "Plutocracy?"	151
	What Can Be Done to "Purify" Politics?	155
XII.	SELFISH BUSINESS	163
	When May Business Be Called Selfish?	163

CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
	What Harm Is Being Done to Employees?	168
	What Harm Is Being Done to the Public?	172
XIII.	PRIVILEGE	180
	Is Our Present Distribution of Wealth and Income Tolerable?	180
	What Can Be Said For Existing Inequalities?	184
	How Far Are Our Present Inequalities Due to Privilege?	190
XIV.	SUPPRESSION OF OPINION	197
	Why Is the Right of Free Speech Important?	197
	Are There Necessary Exceptions to the Right of Free Speech?	202
	Are We Subject to Suppression of Opinion?	208
XV.	POISONED JOURNALISM	214
	Have We a Free Press?	214
	How Is the Public Injured?	221
	What Can Be Done About It?	226
XVI.	DEMORALIZING ART AND LITERATURE	232
	How Much Influence Does Art Have Upon Morality?	232
	What Are the Moral Dangers of Art?	238
	Should Art Be Subject to Censorship?	242
	Can Art Be Used Positively For Moral Ends?	248
XVII.	DOGMATISM AND INDOCTRINATION	252
	Dogmatism and Its Cure	252
	What About Missions?	256
	What About Our Sectarianism?	259
	What Is the Task of the Church?	260
XVIII.	RACE PREJUDICE	267
	Is Race Prejudice Inevitable?	267
	The Negro Problem in America	269
	The Japanese-American Problem	275
	The Immigration Problem	278

CHAPTER PAGE

XIX. War 284
What Are the Results of Modern War? . . . 284
Would Anything Justify War Under Present Conditions? 291
How Can War Be Abolished? 297

XX. Isolationism 303
Is International Organization Necessary? . . 303
What Are the Objections to World-authority? . 306
Should We Join the Existing League? . . . 313

PART THREE

MORALITY AND THE FUTURE

XXI. Conservatism and Radicalism 321
Conservatism vs. Radicalism 321
Why Are Most People So Conservative? . . . 323
Which Is the Greater Danger For America To-day? 328

XXII. Moral Progress 336
Optimism vs. Pessimism with Regard to Progress 336
The Dark Side of the Picture 339
The Bright Side of the Picture 342

XXIII. Moral Reform 347
Help From Eugenics 347
Help From Euthenics 352
Help From Education 354

PART ONE

THE OLD MORALITY AND THE NEW

These opening chapters contrast the old, authoritarian morality with the new morality based upon observation of the results of conduct.

THE NEW MORALITY

CHAPTER I

SUPERNATURAL MORALITY

WHY should we be moral? What is the good of morality? No questions that could be asked touch us more closely. And while few have been given more confused and conflicting replies, few are really capable of simpler and more certain answer.

The Animal Origin of Morality

The first point to note is the discovery by genetic psychology that human morality has its roots far back in the lives of our pre-human ancestors. It is the product, as are our instincts and bodily organs, of millions of years of natural selection. And since this stern process results, in general, in the survival of the fittest structures, and types of behaviour, we may be pretty sure, *a priori,* that morality, like our various bodily organs, has survived, persisted, developed because of its *usefulness.*

Consider our animal cousins. The squirrel, storing nuts for the winter, exhibits industriousness and prudence; if these virtues have not been sufficiently developed in him, he will die. And as for the ant, the sluggard may indeed do well to go to her for a moral lesson; the patience and perseverance, the industriousness and co-operative spirit, of

these tiny creatures have increased and multiplied their tribe, have produced for them safety and plenty. Courage is highly developed in many animal species; so is maternal tenderness and self-sacrificing devotion. The individual may thus die the sooner—even the humble hen will risk her life to save her chickens; but the family, the flock, the species will have the better chance of survival, and thus will preserve in future generations those traits that had survival-value for the group.

Man is a highly differentiated animal; and not all his virtues are to be found paralleled in the lives of the other animals. But we do find in them many traits which, when found in men, we call virtues. They are the result of the drive of congenital instincts and the pressure of circumstances. A changing, and in large measure hostile, environment requires adaptability on the part of living organisms, with extinction as the alternative. Morality, considered historically, has been such a re-direction of native impulses as has made for the preservation and welfare of the individual or of the group. But animals, and most men, are capable of little reflection, and never ask why they find themselves impelled to make these efforts and these sacrifices. They follow the gradually altering laws of their being; morality is, in its early stages, as natural and unconscious a development as any other sort of animal behaviour.

The Supposed Supernatural Origin of Morality

When man reaches the reflective stage of his development, he begins to ask himself whence come these promptings and inhibitions that cross his natural desires. And this is the explanation he usually gives: Finding himself confronted by various forces of nature which menace or

favour him, he naturally thinks of these forces as alive, like himself. He fears them, he implores them not to hurt him, he is grateful when they help him. Gradually, under the leadership of the more imaginative and poetic, he comes to personify them clearly, to connect them with his group, to tell tales about them, to worship them. They are his gods. It is their voice in his heart that bids him do this or that, their will that stands between him and his reckless instinctive impulses. If he disobeys the tribal morals, he cowers in fear of their wrath.

Thus, although morality is far older than religion, men came very widely, in early times, to think of themselves as subject to these beings, bound to act in accordance with their commands. Polytheism gave way to monotheism; the concrete physical gods of primitive life were sublimated into the one spiritual God, and all duties were merged in the one duty of obedience to Him. By theological exposition and ecclesiastical edict, morality was stamped as, in its origin and sanctions, the expression of His will. Thus a contemporary churchman writes, "God does not require actions because they are right, but they are right because He requires them, just as others are evil because He forbids them."

Take the Ten Commandments. To put the moral precepts considered of greatest importance into a group of ten, counted on the ten fingers (and thus easily remembered, before the age of writing), was once a natural and common practice. One such decalogue, cherished by that patriotic little Semitic tribe, the Hebrews, and supposed to have been handed by their national god, Jahweh, to their mythical hero, Moses, has been taken over by Christianity and is still taught in thousands of churches as the literal commands of God to man.

Almost every people has similarly attributed its accepted moral code to its gods. But we of Christendom are heirs of the Jewish faith. Our God is the God that spoke through the Jewish priests and prophets; our moral codes are still, in their main outlines, the Jewish codes, and are still regarded by most of us as the expression of the will of this God, whom we take now to be the only real God. The other peoples are heathen, their gods are false gods, their moral codes, so far as they differ from ours, are immoral, mere superstition, prejudice, or conceit. Of course those peoples—except as our missionaries may have converted them to our views—look upon our God and our moral codes as we look upon theirs. So for centuries men have fought for their several religions and their differing conceptions of virtue; few have realized that these conflicts, so tragic and so futile, are arbitrable by reason.

Moral problems, however, are often very complicated, and their solution by reason and experience very difficult. How much simpler to accept a supposedly supernatural code, to lean upon authority! To hold that God commands just this and that behaviour is a source of great mental peace to many; it saves them from the arduous attitude of moral thoughtfulness, it gives, within the community of those who accept the same tradition, a like-mindedness which makes decisions easier and co-operation more feasible. Altogether, it is no wonder that the supernaturalistic conception of morality still so widely persists.

The Inadequacy of Supernatural Morality

As men's horizon widens, the time inevitably comes when they begin to ask: How, after all, do we know that such and such is God's will for man? The study of comparative

religion quickly shows that our particular theological and moral conceptions have grown up in as haphazard a manner as those of rival traditions. If we are candid, we must confess that the evidence that Jahweh handed tablets of stone to a man named Moses on Mount Sinai is no better than the evidence that Zeus and Apollo gave such commands to men as the Iliad and Odyssey record. Whatever be the ultimate truth behind the God-ideas of primitive peoples, it is quite clear that the actual stories of contacts with gods and the receiving of commands from them are legend, or myth, not historic fact. The exhortations of our Christian Bible, for example, represent actually the moral convictions of those particular men whose sermons and poems and letters have been preserved for us in that great anthology of Jewish and early Christian writings. Those men thought they knew God's will. But so have thousands of equally earnest people in all ages.

Suppose, however, we knew that the Greek and Egyptian and Hindoo and Mohammedan accounts of the Divine will for man are untrue, and the Jewish-Christian account true. Why should we obey God? If He were to command us to be cruel or dishonest or mean, would it be our duty to obey? Surely the free-hearted man who really loved his fellows would refuse obedience to such commands. To obey would be slavery, natural enough in a monarchical or feudal era, but unworthy of a democratic age.

Now of course no Christian believes that what God commands *is* ever cruel or in any way immoral. However little we may think we know about God, we agree, at least, that He is good. But to say that He is good *means* nothing unless we have some criterion by which we can judge whether or not He is good. And in fact, it is clear that justice and

mercy and kindness and courage are virtues anyway, whether or no any God commands them. No command from heaven can make them any more surely virtues than they would be in a godless world. And no prohibition by God could make them sins.

In short, morality is not something imposed upon man from without, it is an expression of his own needs. If man had been much less moral than he has been, he would have perished from the face of the earth. Religion may do much for morality, as we shall see in Chapter XVII. But the virtues derive their claims upon us from the particular characteristics of our being and of the situation in which we live.

> No voice from without, even of a Creator and Ruler of the universe, could alter the duties that inhere in the very nature and conditions of human life now that it exists; such a command could not make right other than right, or wrong other than wrong. If God is a conscious Being, aware of and interested in our fortunes, he does no doubt wish us to do right; but the rightness or wrongness of an act is independent of his desire, and just as real if there be no such Being interested in it.[1]

But we must say more than this. The ascription of morality to supernatural sources is not only irrelevant, it is dangerous. For a supposedly supernatural morality is above criticism and resists improvement. The fact that the God pictured in the Old Testament incites his Chosen People to invade and take possession of the land of a neighbouring people, and takes their side in their battles, has made the condemnation of war far more difficult for the Christian world

[1] Durant Drake, *Problems of Religion*, p. 321.

than, for example, for the Buddhists. The picture of the terrible fate that awaits unbelievers,[2] together with such texts as "Constrain them to come in," and "Gather up the tares in bundles and burn them," [3] served for generations to justify the persecution and martyrdom of the more promising and daring liberal thinkers. The text "A witch shall not live" [4] made it possible to torment and put to death many a harmless old soul. Such verses as "I suffer not a woman to teach . . . but to be in silence," [5] have had great influence in perpetuating the subjection of women. In our day Bible texts and ecclesiastical pronouncements claiming divine authority serve to impede the free discussion of such important matters as divorce and birth control.

In short, authoritarian morality is blindfolded morality. Not being founded upon a study of the consequences of conduct, it is not open to correction by the sight of disastrous results. It may be exploited by fanatics and schemers, as when it was made to sanction the Crusades, and later the Inquisition. In our day it is interfering with education (as in the anti-evolution bills) and preventing multitudes from learning important facts about human life.

Nothing can save men from such irrationalities and cruelties but a clear recognition of the fact that morality is made for man, not man for morality. Men have suffered innumerable deprivations and been the victims of untold

[2] To quote one passage out of many: The unbeliever "shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever; and they have no rest day nor night." (Rev. 14:10-11.)

[3] Luke 14:23. Matt. 13:30.

[4] Exodus 22:18.

[5] I Tim. 2:12.

suffering because they have not seen that it lay within their power to shake off their loyality to irrational commandments and adapt their conduct to their actual interests and needs.

Quasi-Supernaturalistic Moralists

Relatively few educated people in our day retain a clearly defined supernaturalistic attitude towards morality. But that attitude still lurks implicitly in most pulpit utterances and church teaching. In various vague or emasculated forms it has, until quite lately, pervaded the writings of most of our moralists.

Take Carlyle, for example, one of the most influential moralists of the Nineteenth Century. He thundered incessantly about the necessity of obedience, of duty, as if there were no question as to *what* our duty is. He scornfully rejected the idea that morality is conduct that makes for human happiness. He simply accepted current Christian ethics, colouring them unconsciously with his own violent predilections. Like the Jewish prophets, he was sure that the Lord spoke through him. He wrote a sarcastic essay on humanitarian prison-reform,[6] in which, with a tone of high moral authority, he scathingly condemned the whole movement and asserted that the only right attitude toward criminals was that of exacting revenge for their crimes. He wrote an essay entitled *The Nigger Question,*[7] in which he emphatically asserted that the permanent subjection of negroes to white men is ordained by God.

Our American moralist of greatest distinction, Emerson, was a man of gentler disposition. But, in love as he was with virtuous behaviour, Emerson showed no clear realization

[6] Thomas Carlyle, *Latter Day Pamphlets: Model Prisons.*
[7] In Vol. VII of his *Critical Essays.*

of what makes some behaviour virtuous and deserving of our adoption. All his utterances are simply *obiter dicta.* We may agree, or we may disagree; but there is no arguing about it. We have here the lingering echo of supernaturalistic morality, caught up and expressed by a sensitive and gifted personality. No reasons for moral preference are given, save to follow our own intuitions—which, as experience shows, may be good or may be very bad.

Among contemporaries we may point to Maeterlinck, who has written of "the great useless virtues," virtues which are not justifiable by our intelligence, yet, for some mystic reason, demand our allegiance.[8] Or we may point to Felix Adler, who writes of the "supersensible and supereminent origin" of the moral law, "a law not to be explained in terms of sensible experience, so that it might be thoroughly grasped by the understanding, or its use fully seen," but whose authority is "as of a hand laid upon us." [9] Among the duties thus laid upon us, according to Dr. Adler, is the duty of never getting a divorce, no matter what a dire mistake a marriage may have been.[10]

Such writers as these are witnesses to the momentum of the supernaturalistic tradition. Morality is for them something mystical and absolute; it has lost its definitely theological sanction, but has not yet been firmly founded on experience of the consequences of conduct. Conscience is an unintelligible inner drive, which they reverence and obey but cannot explain. Inspiring preachers they may be, whose intuitions may, by good fortune, be sound; but they have no power to enlighten our understanding or to solve disputed problems. They are transitional products, half-way between

[8] Maurice Maeterlinck, *The Measure of the Hours: Our Anxious Morality.*
[9] Felix Adler, *The Religion of Duty,* pp. 93-97.
[10] Felix Adler, *Marriage and Divorce.*

the simple and clear—if irrational—conception of morality as obedience to the commandments of a Supernatural Being, and the simple, clear, and rational conception of morality as that sort of conduct which makes for the happiness of sentient creatures.

CHAPTER II

MORAL SKEPTICISM

The Revolt Against Authority

Most people, accepting their ideas as they do from their fellows, have been far too conventionally minded to be skeptical of the value or obligatoriness of morality. So shocking a notion would not occur to them. But as the human race gets more and more sophisticated, such daring thoughts are bound to arise with increasing frequency. And perhaps the most serious harm done, in the long run, by the teaching of morality as supernaturally imposed lies in the skeptical reaction which such teaching is sure sooner or later to provoke. In our day the illusions of authoritarianism have been thoroughly punctured. And young people who have never been taught the rational basis of morality are in danger of drifting into a sort of moral anarchy.

We need not become pessimistic, however. This sort of thing has happened before in human history. It happened in notable degree in Athens after the Persian wars, and again in Italy in the Fourteenth Century. Readers of Aristophanes can tell us how aghast the older people of his day were at the radicalism of the young; Socrates, founder of scientific ethics, was put to death for turning youth from the good old ways. The young humanists of the Renaissance were anathema to the church-going people, who were still living in Dante's world. But what do we see, looking backward from

our vantage-point in the Twentieth Century? These two periods marked the two swiftest and most important developments of the human mind that history records. In both cases the old morality dissolved. But it recrystallized in humaner and more rational forms. . . . By contrast, look at the stretches of human history when youth did *not* doubt and question and experiment—the thousand years of medieval stagnation, the arrested civilizations of Egypt, of India, of China, of Peru. Which picture is the more pleasing?

Both of these two great fruitful periods in human history coincided with a swing from authoritarian to naturalistic ethics. Socrates and Plato founded morality firmly upon the rock of reason and experience; and if their ideas had become general, the actual development of humane civilization might have been anticipated by more than a thousand years. But the Athenian freemen were never more than a handful in the midst of an alien population. Wars, the exigencies of practical life, and the emotional tide of Christianity, quickly obliterated this faint flicker of reason; and thus the first hope of man's redemption through intelligence was lost. As for the Renaissance, it weakened the authority of the medieval moral ideals, and broadened men's minds with new and alluring vistas of what life had once been and might again be. But it had no clear conception of the principles that must underlie a rational ethics and so left men floundering in a confused and capricious individualism. The world ever since has been wavering between the secure loyalties of supernaturalistic ethics and the dangerous freedom of moral skepticism.

But we must not be discouraged; such great movements of the human spirit take many generations to accomplish their work. We are only in our own day reaping the fruits of

the Reformation, freeing religion from ecclesiastical authority and dogma. The seeds of religious liberty were sown by the Reformers, but they were not themselves clearly conscious of the implications of their revolt. So the humanists of the *quattrocento,* rebelling against the cramping and distorted moral code of the Middle Ages, sowed seeds which are only now taking effective root on a world-wide scale. Religion is beginning to cease from antagonizing reason in the name of Authority, and rational morals in the name of supposedly eternal but really very local and provincial moral codes. Intelligence is increasingly free from domination by emotionalized prejudice; we are turning the key and emerging from the prison of authoritarianism.

Bernard Shaw is one of the outstanding leaders of this revolt.

> Our ideals, like the gods of old, are constantly demanding human sacrifices. The realist at last loses patience with ideals altogether, and sees in them only something to blind us, something to numb us, something to murder self in us. Every step of progress means a duty repudiated and a scripture torn up.[1]

This is intelligible and valuable as a reaction against authoritarian ethics. But it is dangerous. For the absence of moral standards is apt to be even more disastrous than loyalty to a narrow and repressive code. And in the long run moral anarchism may be a more serious enemy of human happiness than authoritarianism has been.

Are Right and Wrong Purely Conventional Terms?

It is not merely rebellious youths or clever essayists who

[1] *The Quintessence of Ibsenism.*

are swinging over to moral nihilism. A great deal of serious and valuable anthropological, sociological, and ethical writing is proceeding on the apparent assumption that nothing is *really* right or wrong, except in the sense of being the accepted code of a particular community. Morals are *mores,* customs, approved by a group; all that is to be said about them, it would seem, is to relate what these customs are. The implication seems to be that there is no possible way to prove one such set of customs *better* than another; we can describe, but cannot approve or condemn, except from the standpoint of our own *mores,* which may equally well be condemned from the point of view of other communities. A book recently written to be used as a text-book in ethics states that its purpose is

> to investigate through a study of actual behavior, what are the moral principles upon which men conduct their lives. It is a study of what *is* rather than of what *ought to be.* . . . In class-room work I have not allowed the use of the word *ought* at all as indicating a course of conduct which student or instructor deemed right. We are here seeking to find out *what oughts* there are, i.e., what duties society has declared to be owed to it. Those duties may be quite irrational, based upon ancient taboos. *N'importe! What are they?* [2]

The cases cited in the book from which this quotation is taken are mostly cases showing court decisions and decisions of public opinion in recent years in the United States, i.e., the judgments (and prejudices) of certain individuals and majorities within a very limited range of time and place. Of course, within this same range of place and time there

[2] S. C. Cox, *The Public Conscience,* pp. 36, 45.

were many individuals and minority groups, and in some communities majority groups, with widely different moral judgments. And an extension of range in either place or time would expose almost unlimited diversity of opinion.

The alert reader of such books will naturally say, Why should I be bound by the particular moral standards which chance to be generally accepted just now in the community in which I happen to live? Why not endeavour to change those standards? Why not live by my own standards? Or, since there seem to be no objective and absolute standards, why not do as I please?

It is of no use to urge such moral anarchists to obey the Moral Law; they look upon the Moral Law as a superstition and a tyranny. It is of no use to tell them to obey their conscience; they point out that the voice of conscience is the reflection of a man's bringing-up, the echo in him of the approvals and disapprovals of the community in which he lives, and therefore no more deserving of allegiance than the say-so of the community, which it reflects.

The moral anarchists are certainly right in this: Conscience is not a faculty which gives all normal men identical guidance. On the contrary, the consciences of different men differ to an extraordinary degree; and it is clear that this internal moral sense is the *product,* rather than the *source,* of our moral standards. It can be exalted as a safe guide only by those whose interest in morals is limited to the morals of a single tradition. For that matter, even within a single community, within a single family, there are often profoundly different conceptions of duty. But when we look farther afield, when we consider, for example, the conscientiousness with which religious fanatics have destroyed great libraries, monuments of art, and other priceless possessions

of humanity, or when we consider the conscientiousness with which Japanese look upon suicide, in certain circumstances, as a grave duty, while Roman Catholics look upon it as a mortal sin, we cannot but recognize the arbitrariness of the particular sense of duty that we happen to have developed.

Is the conclusion to be drawn, then, that morality is entirely conventional? that one man's standards are as good as another's? If so, my lax standards are as good, for me, as your austere standards are for you. There are instincts and passions in most men which welcome such a conclusion; and it is no wonder that the waning of supernaturalism has led to an increase in moral laxity and irresponsibility.

The Folly of Moral Skepticism

But the conclusion is quite unwarranted. A good deed is not made good by the fact that an individual or a community *judges* it good, *approves* it, or *imposes* it. It is a matter not of opinion but of fact. A deed is good if it is the sort of deed that has good results; whether any one recognizes it as good is quite secondary. Any act that is of the sort to have harmful results is a bad act, whether or not any one condemns it. The purpose of considering moral problems is precisely to adjust our opinions to facts, to consider in detail what consequences various types of conduct have, and to develop in ourselves an approval for conduct which has good consequences and a disapproval of conduct which we find to be, in the end, harmful.

There is a sense, indeed, in which morality is relative. It is relative to our needs, our interests, and our situation. A poet or a philosopher may, because of his physical and mental make-up, the work which he is trying to do, and the effects upon him and his work of various environmental

factors, require comforts which a coal-heaver would not need. In so far, his duties would be different. A man who has become deeply interested in some phase of nature or human life may legitimately devote time and energy and money to it which would not be warranted in the case of the average man. To a limited extent, we may and should "do in Rome as the Romans do," adopt the manners, the clothing, the habits of the people we are living with, so as to avoid needless friction, widen our experience and sympathies, and feel ourselves members of a community rather than isolated and apart. Certainly, in so far as *situations* are different, duties are different. Life offers us infinitely varying situations, and because of that, moral generalizations are difficult to make and always liable to exception.

A recent writer has overemphasized this truth in the following passage:

> There are no ethics worth a thought; there cannot be. At the best any generalization is but an average, therefore never quite true even of one instance, and it will have as many exceptions as inclusions. And *prima facie* no one can tell which is an inclusion or which an exception, because there never have been, never are, and never can be two cases quite the same. . . . You cannot standardize humanity. It changes, it evolves, and what was true yesterday is not so today; what is true for you is not so for me. . . . How can you have a fixed answer to meet all contingencies? Men are not machines.[3]

However, the writer just cited took the trouble to write several books and a number of magazine articles which

[3] A. Clutton-Brock, in *The Atlantic Monthly,* Vol. 113, p. 474.

formulate and defend ethical generalizations and evidently were written to convert readers to them.

The sober fact is, that although we are considerably unlike one another, and find ourselves in very varying situations, we are more alike than unlike, and find ourselves recurrently in situations so alike that it is feasible, and imperiously necessary, to formulate general maxims and ideals. It is highly desirable to approach our daily problems with an eye open for what is new and unique in the situation, so as not to be bound to principles of conduct which may, because of some new factor, have ceased to be properly applicable. But no situation is wholly unique; there is bound to be much similarity with situations that have occurred over and over again in human experience. And it is a vast help in guiding our conduct to have an ample background of general ideas which we can apply to the particular situation.

The most elementary experience shows that some people make a genuine success of living while most people bungle their lives more or less, some very badly. It does matter whether our lives are worth a good deal, to ourselves and to our neighbours, or whether at the end we are fain to cry, "O Lord, be merciful to me, a fool." Skepticism of long venerated moral standards may be the sign of a developed critical faculty, or of a mere rebelliousness and lack of experience. But skepticism of the moral attitude in general is sheer folly. For if men and women do silly and cruel things, as they very generally do, it is the plainest common sense to try to learn not to make these needless blunders. To quote the very author who denied the possibility of ethics, we need to take morality "more seriously than politics, or machinery, or drains, or any other science:

For all of these, however necessary, are subsidiary to the management of the self; and all would be a thousand times better managed by a race of beings who knew how to manage themselves." [4]

We are reaping what we have sown; and we probably have much yet to reap. The natural reaction from blind reliance upon authority in morals is moral skepticism. We are retaining our moral standards largely through the mere momentum of tradition and the inherent conservatism of human nature. But with the spread of scientific and historical knowledge the *super-rational* conception of morality is bound to lose more and more ground, and morality is sure to be looked upon increasingly as *sub-rational,* as mere stereotyped habit and superstition. The only hope lies in teaching people generally that morality is *rational,*

> neither a mystery nor a convention, but simply an observance of the laws of provident living. . . . Morality is a collection of formulas and models based solidly on experience of acts and their consequences. . . . To be moral is simply to be intelligent, to be right-minded and open-minded in the unavoidable business of living.[5]

The revolt against morality is a natural result of the fact that most people have followed morality blindly, with little realization of its actual function in safeguarding our future and protecting us from injurious acts on the part of others. It is usually learned by imitation of our elders and by following precepts heard in childhood. So it naturally appears to us as conforming to a Law, as obeying a set of arbitrary

[4] A. Clutton-Brock, in *The Atlantic Monthly,* Vol. 128, p. 721. This article is several years later than the other.
[5] R. B. Perry, *The Moral Economy,* pp. 1-2.

rules, rather than as the endeavour to secure certain *results.*

But after all, the same thing happens in the practice of all the arts that happens here in the practice of the art of life: We must, in large measure, trust the maxims laid down for us by earlier generations. To work out in detail the manner of life best adapted to secure our common welfare would be a task far beyond the powers of any individual or any generation. The task has been done for us, blunderingly and blindly, but still with much cumulative wisdom, by the generations that have preceded us. We must accept existing codes warily, as we accept warily the common sense of our age with respect to the nature of the world in which we live. Perhaps the field of morals is more infested with prejudice than any other field, save that of religious beliefs. But even so, few of us can do much in the way of criticism and experimentation.

Indeed, this is the one field where we *must,* to a degree, accept and conform. Religious beliefs we can dispense with entirely, if we are willing to relinquish the consolation and inspiration that such beliefs may bring. Economic, political, artistic creeds most of us can do without. But some code for life itself, though we may not formulate it, we must follow. And though a few of us may be pioneers in this line or that, most of us have neither the talent nor the time to break new paths, but must perforce, for the most part, walk in the trodden ways or run grave risks of disaster.

CHAPTER III

NATURAL MORALITY

What Morality Is

THE first step toward understanding what morality is consists in grasping the primary meaning of the terms "good" and "bad." For the moral use of these terms is secondary, and derivative. In their primary sense "good" and "bad" denote two very pervasive aspects of experience. For example, when we are well, and free from disturbing thoughts, such experiences as tasting delicious food, smelling delicate perfumes, listening to harmonious music, participating in a favourite outdoor game, are enjoyable. They are intrinsically good experiences, good in themselves, without reference to anything else. On the other hand, to feel a throbbing toothache, or any bodily pain, to eat unpalatable food, to smell sickening odours, to be seized by fear, regret, disappointment, loneliness or remorse, is to have an intrinsically bad experience. At bottom, "good" and "bad" are purely descriptive terms; they point to two well-known qualities of experience. Pleasure and pain, happiness and unhappiness, are as indefinable as red or blue; but there is no more ambiguity about the one set of terms than about the other. We all know perfectly well what these terms mean. We all know that certain experiences feel *good,* others feel *bad,* that some experiences feel *better* or *worse* than others.

Now to say that some experiences *feel* better or worse

than others is to say that (apart from ulterior considerations) they *are* better or worse. For goodness and badness, betterness and worseness, are, *in their primary signification,* aspects, or qualities, of feeling. And quite apart from any system of morality, it would be an increase in the *good* to increase, or heighten, the intrinsically good experiences of living creatures, and to diminish their intrinsically bad experiences. Indeed, to refuse to do so for no sufficient reason would be cruel.

But here we have already a moral term. Cruelty may be enjoyable, for the cruel person, but it is *morally* wrong. Why? Obviously because it consists in inflicting pain or sorrow—some sort of intrinsically bad experience, or in depriving some one of some happy experience which he might otherwise have had. To generalize, *moral* terms apply to acts in view of their natural *consequences.* Happy experiences will be morally wrong if they tend to result in greater *un*happiness, while unhappy experiences will be morally right if they tend to result in greater happiness. But the only thing that matters, ultimately, is the kind of feelings that sentient creatures have. If conscious beings had no capacity for pain or pleasure, for sorrow or joy, there would be no sense in preferring one act to another, no meaning to morality, no possibility of any sort of *evaluation* at all.

This seems very elementary and obvious. Yet it is not widely recognized, at least with any clearness, that morality actually serves to foster human happiness or lessen human suffering, and that this is, ultimately, its only *raison d'être.* It is easy enough to see that most of our accepted moral ideals do serve that purpose. But what needs clearer recognition is the fact that if any one of these accepted ideals does *not* make for the greatest attainable human happiness,

it is a cruel ideal, not deserving of our allegiance, and in need of emphatic repudiation. If a moralist who is more in love with some happiness-destroying code of behaviour than with human happiness insists on appropriating to it the name "morality," we can reply that we prefer to use that eulogistic term for humanitarian conduct and to label the conduct which he approves as "immoral."

Even this matter of label is important, for these terms, "morality," virtue," etc., carry with them a great weight of human love and loyalty, while such labels as "immorality" and "sin" have a powerful deterrent effect. But what is of prime importance is to see clearly that if an act has no tendency to lessen the amount of happiness in the world, it is not wrong, and no prohibition by man or god or conscience could make it wrong. It is absolutely necessary that adult human beings should understand this, because our accepted codes of conduct still, after many centuries of haphazard development, are imperfectly moral, sustain many an injustice, and inflict much deprivation and loss. Not until men clearly see what morality is *about* will they see clearly how to perfect their moral ideas and their moral practice.

But, on the other hand, it is quite as important to realize the converse truth that the way to secure human happiness is to be moral; not, necessarily, to follow the code accepted by the majority in a given community, for that may be a distorted or inadequate code, but to be *really* moral. Being moral will, of course, not suffice for procuring happiness. Man is at the mercy of too many forces, and beset by too many dangers, to be able to ensure his happiness by the most skilfully adjusted conduct that he can devise. He must learn far more about nature and develop far more power to cope with the forces which surround him and pen-

etrate his very being, if he is to render his happiness on earth secure. But morality means doing the best we can, here and now, with the knowledge we possess. In its widest sense, as the art of life in general, it is the part that *we* can play. In the end we are at the mercy of things as they are; our best efforts may end in frustration. But at least, if we are truly and intelligently moral, we shall have done our part. And there is much satisfaction in that.

Some Other Definitions of Morality

The definition of morality has been given various forms by different schools of moralists. Some say, for example, that morality is what conduces to *self-realization.* . . . But it is clear that to realize potentialities which lie in one's nature may be morally *bad*—if they happen to be potentialities of cruel or vicious conduct. To develop what is latent within oneself is *good* only if, and in so far as, such development makes life happier, in the long run, either for the individual concerned or for others.

At best, "self-realization" is an ambiguous and indeterminate ideal. To say, Here is a capacity in me, I must develop it, is indiscriminating. Not only do we inherit capacities from our animal ancestors which are, under modern conditions, undesirable to develop, but, since our capacities are very numerous and our span of life is very short, we can realize only a few of them at best, and must perforce leave the others undeveloped.

> Not until late in life, if ever, does the notion that only one of two mutually exclusive ideals is realizable make itself an unevictable tenant of the mind. I cannot remember that my own boyhood admitted the possibility of such a thing as civil war among my more gen-

> eral wishes. For a while I was bent upon being a mystery socially, a thing apart, a character fateful, ravaged, dark, stormswept, a sacrifice on the altar of sky-high aspiration or iciest grief, yet this Byronic preference did not collide with my inclination to be quite simply the life of the party and unassumingly gay. 'The sober majesties of settled, sweet, epicurean life'—a taste for these seemed quite consistent with a career of more than antique stoicism, of varied evils, Roman and frontier evils, borne with unwarying fortitude, for the pure sake of bearing them. . . .

The slogan "self-realization" must be given a definite interpretation before it can be a guide. If it is taken to mean the fullest development of really valuable individual potentialities that is consistent with the opportunity for development of other people's potentialities, it may be of some practical value in rousing people from apathy, to become what it lies in them to be, and in fostering a generous and encouraging attitude toward those who have other interests and capacities than our own. Only through the diverging and many-sided development of its infinitely varying individuals can society attain its maximum efficiency and everybody find the greatest possible happiness. The best way to state the ideal would be as "self-realization for all mankind," the degree of individual self-realization being limited and its direction to some extent determined by the needs and rights of the other members of the community.

But there is grave question whether the doctrine of self-realization is not more misleading than useful. The great religious teachers have almost universally felt that man's great need is to get out of himself, to lose himself in love and adoration for what is greater than himself. The men

who have drunk most deeply of life are not those who have been concerned with developing their own talents, or characters, but those who have forgotten themselves most completely in their devotion to those whom they loved, or to some great Cause.

We need not, however, settle the question of the practical value of the "self-realization" ideal. All that we are concerned to point out here is that this ideal, as a *moral* ideal, presupposes the fundamental fact of differences in the immediate worth of different sorts of experiences. If it were not for that fact, no realization of potentialities would be a *good*. If men were incapable of feeling pleasure or pain, joy or sorrow, it would not matter in the least which potentialities of their behaviour were actualized, or whether any of them were.

To put this in other terms, objects are not good because desired, but because—whether desired or not—they are actually means toward the enhancement of happiness. There are pathological desires, the fulfilment of which would bring only pain, as in the case of a man who has an almost irresistible impulse to jump from a high place. We must consider, in our judgments of value, not so much what people may happen to want, but what is good for them, and endeavour to educate their desires toward what would really make them, and those whom they affect, happy. Happiness is not good because people want it, or suffering bad because people reject it. Many an ascetic spurns happiness, and not a few welcome, or persuade themselves that they welcome, suffering. But a disinterested observer can see that the happiness which the ascetic spurns would nevertheless be a good if it were experienced, and that the suffering is an evil, however it be borne. Of course the matter is

complicated by the fact that a certain amount of satisfaction may be experienced in the very act of spurning another form of satisfaction, and the fact that suffering welcomed or tranquilly borne, without fretting or resentment, may be thereby rendered much less acute. The principle should be plain, however, that it is the actual feelings experienced that are good or bad; the attitudes toward these experiences (or toward the objects that cause them), whether these attitudes consist of desire, or interest, or indifference, or repulsion, have their own intrinsic worth, according as they are themselves happy or unhappy experiences, but they cannot alter the actual, experienced worth of the experiences to which they refer.

A conspicuous tendency among contemporary philosophers is to ignore the sentient aspect of life and to discuss behaviour in purely biological terms. According to this "behaviouristic" value-philosophy, values are simply "objects of interest"; whatever an organism seeks is *ipso facto* a good. Morality would consist, then, in an organization, or harmonization, of interests. . . . This is much better than supernaturalistic or mystical ethics. It is correct in making values relative to the needs and situations of organisms. But the mere fact that an organism tends in this or that direction does not create *value,* any more than the fact that water seeks a lower level makes Niagara Falls a great good. If water *enjoyed* falling, Niagara *would* be a great good. It is the fact that organisms are *sentient,* that they do enjoy this and suffer from that, that brings *values* into being.

It is true, as an empirical generalization, that the function of morality is largely to harmonize conflicting interests, to organize the individual life, and the life of society. This is not the only function of morality—another function is to

open up new vistas, develop new interests, enrich and broaden life—but it is an important one; and the phrase "organization of interests" may perhaps be so stretched and interpreted as to serve as a definition of morality. But why is an integration of interests *better* than a set of miscellaneous and independent interests? Simply because conflict and cross-purposes bring unhappiness. The harmonious personality, playing his due part in a harmonious society, is obviously the goal towards which we must move if we are to bring human happiness to its fullest fruition.

But it is impossible and undesirable to effect a complete integration of interests. To some extent goods must remain miscellaneous. To exclude everything that does not contribute to the realization of one's dominating purpose would be to lose much of the incidental worth of living. Perhaps more people suffer from the lack of a life-plan, a goal toward which to be striving; for without such a guiding purpose, life is apt to be trivial and fruitless. But to pursue such a plan ruthlessly, without enjoying the many good things of life along the way, whether or not they contribute to the *leit-motif,* is not only to miss much, but is almost sure to lead to depression of spirit and to make a man a hard person to live with.

There seems to be no reason for the position that a man's life should be nothing more than the expression of one central purpose. The desirability of unifying our careers does not mean that we must make them a logical and complete unity, excluding all which is irrelevant to the main theme. As in music, so in human life, the main theme is enhanced by the obligatoes, the trills, the overtones, the embroideries and embellishments, which are lovely in themselves and yet do not

> delay the pealing notes of the central motive. It is always found important to have a major purpose, a voluntary selection of a special correlated set of goods, which will be put ahead of all else. Devotion to this central purpose will buoy a man up in moments of necessary sacrifice of other goods. Only consecutive and persistent effort in a chosen direction ensures the continued attainment over a period of time of the desired succession of goods. Yet not everything else needs to be related as contributory to the central purpose. To relate everything is, in so far as theory is concerned, to reduce many independent intrinsic goods to the status of mere instrumental goods, and, in so far as practice is concerned, to lose a vast, even if secondary, field of real enjoyment. A man should not eat his dinner simply for the sake of the added strength which he will thereby gain for the carrying on of his profession. A man should not go to a concert simply for the sake of fresh inspiration to carry on his appointed tasks. The dinner and the concert are goods in themselves and should be appreciated as such.[1]

When we speak, then, of morality as the organization of interests, we mean only the prevention of needless clashes, the resolution of conflicting purposes, and as much integration of interest as is necessary to give life purposiveness and plan. How far purposes may be left unrelated, pleasures purely incidental, ideals diverse, can only be decided by considering the concrete effects upon happiness in a given case.

Some Objections to Happiness as the End

What shall we say, now, to such a familiar point of view as that expressed in the following quotation:

[1] S. P. Lamprecht, in *The Journal of Philosophy*, Vol. 17, p. 562.

> In our judgment of values we do not appraise happiness—certainly not pleasure—as the highest good. There are other things which we rank higher—genius, ability, devotion to ideals, heroism, self-sacrifice, public service, originality. Our biographies are not those of happy people. Jesus was a man of sorrows. Socrates was executed as a criminal.[2]

The first thing to say is that all the qualities mentioned in the second sentence of this quotation are *means.* We come to love and admire them for themselves and forget that their value is instrumental. But what *good* would there be in genius, in heroism, in any of these qualities, wherein would their good *consist,* except in their conduciveness to happiness? Of course we honour and love men who are willing to sacrifice their own happiness for that of other people. But if their sacrifice, their heroism, their genius is so spent as to bring *nobody* happiness (or save nobody from unhappiness), then our admiration for them is misspent. It is easy to see that the conduct of Jesus, and that of Socrates, was enormously fruitful in human happiness; they are among the great saviours of mankind—Jesus from selfishness and sensuality, Socrates from unreason and folly. But when a Napoleon uses his genius in such a way as to bring agony and death to many thousands of innocent people, leaving destruction, fear, resentment and hate in his wake, we should rate him, for all his genius, as highly immoral. And when a St. Augustine, from however high motives, uses his energies and his talents to foster superstition and credulity, to stifle reason and freedom of thought, we should look up him not as a benefactor but as an enemy of man.

[2] G. T. W. Patrick, *Introduction to Philosophy,* p. 411.

This fundamental fact was clearly perceived by Socrates himself, and expressed by him with definite finality:

> Then you think that pain is an evil and pleasure is a good. And even pleasure you deem an evil, when it robs you of greater pleasure than it gives, or causes pain greater than the pleasure. If, however, you call pleasure an evil in regard to some other end or standard, you will be able to show us that standard. *But you have none to show.*[a]

This does not mean that a conscious desire to secure happiness or avoid pain is the dominant *motive* of human action. On the contrary, men follow their very various instincts and impulses, and seldom stop to think of the effects of their conduct upon their own happiness or that of others. Nor does it mean that we *ought,* as rational beings, to be doing what people call pleasure-seeking. Of course we have to keep our minds, most of the time, upon the concrete things we are doing. No, it simply means that the *touchstone* by which all these concrete activities are to be morally judged is—their fruitfulness in happiness.

Nothing would be more salutary than an attempt to re-rate the supposed heroes and saints of history on the basis of their actual contributions to human happiness. And nothing is more needed than that we should stop now and then to evaluate our own conduct in the same way. Sometimes it is right that we should make the people about us unhappy. Jesus apparently made his parents unhappy when he left them to take up his itinerant preaching, and certainly offended many pious people by refusing to be bound by their accepted moral conventions. Socrates was the cause

[a] Plato, *Protagoras,* 354.

of a good deal of unhappiness on the part of the parents of some of the youths whose minds he upset. We cannot be too tender of people's susceptibilities, especially when those susceptibilities are the result of bigotry, jealousy, or pride; in some cases the securing of the greatest attainable good necessitates the choosing of present hurt, to ourselves or to others. But in general, and allowing for such possibilities, it is an excellent test of our conduct to ask ourselves from time to time whether we are really making ourselves and other people happy or miserable.

Often, of course, it is very difficult to know, and very difficult to choose between alternative courses of conduct on the ground of their happiness-producing effects. But these uncertainties are not to be removed by the discovery of any surer criterion. Life must remain an experimental enterprise. Ethics can never be a hard and fast code, but must remain a series of suggestions, revealing unsuspected possibilities to this man, warning that man of pitfalls which others' experience has found, and bringing up the mass of obviously stupid and shortsighted conduct to the level of the relatively fortunate solutions discovered by the more successful.

The art of working for human happiness is so devious and complicated that it profits us little, in the majority of everyday decisions, to have the ultimate end in mind. The greatest happiness of the greatest number is too abstract a formula to be of much immediate value to the individual or to the social reformer. Just as a walker setting out to cross the continent would have to be thinking, not of his ultimate destination, but of which turn he should take to reach some town that lies near by on his route, so we have to be thinking of how to earn our livings, how to bring up our children,

how to cure this cold or catch that train. But from time to time we need to sit down and take stock of our habits and ideals, to see whether our general direction is right, or whether, perhaps, we are, in some of our conduct, moving away from, rather than towards, our proper goal.

CHAPTER IV

THE IRKSOMENESS OF DUTY

Why Is Duty Irksome?

PERHAPS what we have been talking about does not sound to the average reader much like morality. Morality consists, it will be said, mostly of efforts, sacrifices, deprivations; it is usually expressed in prohibitions and warnings. It is not concerned with happiness, it is concerned with *duty.*

But *why* these prohibitions and warnings, these deprivations and duties? It would be sheer cruelty to deprive any human being of any happiness he could find, unless there were imperious reason for so doing. . . . Well, imperious reason there often is. Human nature is full of conflicting desires. We want to do today what we shall be sorry to have done tomorrow; we neglect to do today what we shall be sorry not to have done some days or years from now. We are more or less lazy, stupid, heedless, we are at times selfish, jealous, cruel. If left to our natural impulses we should quarrel with one another, work at cross-purposes, hurt one another and ourselves in all sorts of unnecessary ways. The fact is, we have inherited instincts and tendencies which were of use to our remote ancestors, and may, in most cases, be of use to us if restrained and guided. But we are not properly equipped by heredity to cope with the conditions of civilized human life; we need an overlay of

moral training. What is best in the long run and for the greatest number should rationally take precedence over what chances to be wanted by this or that individual at the moment.

There are those who refuse to analyze the reasons for duty, and feel that such an analysis destroys the validity of the moral imperative. But this is mere confusion of thought. We do not destroy the meaning of "ought" when we show *why* we ought. On the contrary, no "ought" could possibly have validity for us which was not based upon sensible reasons. Duty is imposed upon the individual at the moment, but only in his own final interest, or in the interest of the common welfare.

There is nothing, then, mysterious or arbitrary about duty. It is simply what is *due* others—or even, perhaps, due our own future selves. Devotion to duty is what keeps an individual from living heedlessly in the present and for himself alone. Our sense of duty may become morbid and distorted and lead us to unnecessary sacrifices. But it has been developed during man's long struggle for existence because of its usefulness, and in its normal forms is a very valuable guide for passionate, self-seeking and capricious men.

Morality has had to concern itself chiefly with safeguarding us against the lure of the immediate and the selfish. So it *has* been for the most part a set of inhibitions and checks; and it figures in our eyes as something dreary and remedial, like bitter medicine. There seems to be no help for this, except in a wiser bringing-up, which should early develop prudence and sympathy, and lead us insensibly to prefer the better ways. But in any case, beyond the weary stretches of this negative and prohibitory morality lie the pleasanter reaches of conduct that secures positive happiness, that brings

sunshine and music and joy into life. We do not commonly think of such delightful activity as moral. But the energies of men need not, in normal situations, be wholly taken up with diminishing suffering and averting danger, they may and should extend to making human life as full as possible of rich and varied joys.

We are conscious of duty only when it crosses our inclinations; indeed, there would be no need of forming the concept of "duty" except for such conflicts. Even so, when morality is sternest and most forbidding, it is our best friend —providing, of course, it is a sane and rational morality, and not some needless prejudice. But morality is never wholly alien to our instincts; it is often, if we have normal sympathies, what we most want to do. This reconcilement to morality, this spontaneous joy in what is also the highest virtue, is to be seen conspicuously in the mother, the lover, the friend. And the chief value of the great religions is that they have trained their devotees to find their immediate happiness in such conduct as is morally best.

The Apotheosis of Duty

Many people feel, more or less vaguely, that the development of a *good character* is the end of life. But what *is* a good character? Can it be clearly defined except as a set of tendencies-to-action of the happiness-producing sort? So, if we are urged to "follow virtue for virtue's sake," we shall have to ask, What *is* virtue? How shall we decide what acts are virtuous? We have seen that obedience to a God's commands, or to the commands of the community in which we live, would not be virtue, would be mere slavish obsequiousness, unless we presupposed that these commands were *worthy* of our obedience. And what could possibly

make them worthy but their effectiveness in producing actual concrete felt worth in the experience of living beings? There simply *is* no other *ultimate* criterion for conduct. In Mr. Santayana's words: "All worth leads us back to actual feeling somewhere, or else evaporates into nothing—into a word and a superstition." [1]

The view that goodness of character is the only really important good may be regarded as a sour-grapes philosophy, devised originally by the oppressed and the unfortunate, who had little besides their virtues in which to take satisfaction, or inculcated by the oppressors, to keep those whom they were exploiting from being too resentful. Healthy, normal people, who are not hopelessly warped by an ascetic tradition, know that all innocent pleasures are worth while in themselves; the enjoyment of music, art, travel, sport, love, add immeasurably to the worth of human life. But normal people pursue these ends spontaneously, without being prodded or cajoled. Goodness of character, on the other hand, being so often opposed to immediate desire, requires advertisement. We cannot depend upon ourselves to deal coolly with a situation that arouses deep-rooted instincts or passions without developing an enthusiasm for virtue itself.

But there are several dangers latent in this enthusiasm for virtue, this apotheosis of duty. In the first place, we must beware of supposing that because a given pleasure would be wrong for us, in a certain situation, it is intrinsically bad, and always wrong for every one. It is a natural human tendency to begrudge others pleasures which we have denied ourselves. In some cases the pleasure *may* have been wrong for us, and yet be innocent and legitimate for another, whose

[1] George Santayana, *The Sense of Beauty*, p. 104.

situation and needs are different. In other cases it may be wrong for us today, but right at some later day, when circumstances have changed. And our stern renouncement of a pleasure, when such renouncement is necessary, should not lead us to despise similar pleasures, or to continue to spurn them, if under changing circumstances they should no longer be wrong.

> There is no reason for supposing that the goods which are excluded from a man's plan of life are no longer good. Sacrifice is none the less sacrifice, and that which is sacrificed is a genuine loss. Sacrifice for sacrifice's sake is highly undesirable, and sacrifice, even when deliberate, should not blind men to the fact that they have given up what in itself is really a good. And the sacrifice should not be continued a moment beyond the point where it is essential to the purpose for which it was adopted. . . . Yet in the case of most deliberate sacrifices, just that disregard for, even perhaps genuine hostility towards, the sacrificed good becomes habitual. What is once excluded for sufficient reasons, becomes thereby *tabu* in the absence of all reasons. Men forget that the exclusion was relative to an end which may have been achieved or been replaced by another. The more goods we can accumulate and the more diverse our interests can be made, without imperiling the whole mass of goods, the better it is for us. We should not be blind to the goods which we do not select.[2]

To some extent, what we shall do with our lives is a matter of free choice; but once a choice has been made, a career mapped out, all sorts of duties are created. There must be continuity of purpose, integration of effort about a central

[2] S. P. Lamprecht, in *The Journal of Philosophy*, Vol. 17, p. 562.

intent, sacrifice of what is incompatible with this life-plan, however good what is sacrificed may be in itself, however legitimate for others. But duties of this sort are *instrumental to a chosen end,* and not legislative for all men.

In the second place, we must realize that, even when the situations are similar, the possibilities in solving the problems of life are very various, and that it is often impossible to be sure which is the best solution. In some cases there are diverse possibilities, equally good; in other cases we cannot know which is better, and must walk by faith rather than by sight. Morality is to some extent still experimental; and differing conceptions of duty must sometimes be tolerated side by side without definite decision between them. For this reason our accepted standards of morality are sure to be in some respects arbitrary, and no better (if no worse) than the differing standards of other peoples. The moral to be drawn is not that we should cease to try to find the best ways, or to be strict with ourselves in following what seems best, but that we should be generous and open-minded towards other conceptions of virtue, and not attempt to standardize conduct too completely.

> It is impossible to maintain, in some cases, that one and only one, among several possible choices, is alone morally right. . . . The moral life seems to be confronted with alternative possibilities of development towards different and sometimes inconsistent goods. Individualism of moral judgment, divergence of ultimate ideals, and a certain field of moral chaos are inevitable as long as the world offers such a host of goods and men value those goods so differently. In spite, therefore, of widely held codes of morals, we must remember the arbitrary nature of such systems. And

> when opposition of standards as to the right course of conduct appears, we must not condemn others too freely. . . . We are not always judging between a right and a wrong, but often between two irreconcilable rights, two irreconcilable choices of incommensurable goods. . . . When strife comes, it is not always due to an absolute good *versus* an absolute bad, but sometimes to two incompatible programmes of moral endeavour, striving for realization in a world where they are inconsistent and mutually exclusive.[3]

In the third place, we must remember that the really good character is not necessarily the character that *feels* itself to be good. Good intentions, a spirit of amicable good will, a longing to do right, to serve the Lord, or to reform the world, are not enough; they may coexist with stupidity, prejudice, or unsuspected inner drives, which make the character actually harmful instead of a blessing. People with such characters simply do not see the disastrous consequences of their conduct, or, seeing them, are driven on by some irrational urge, which they perhaps call their sense of duty, and do wrong with a clear conscience. Our judgment of a man's character must therefore hinge upon our perception of its *results*. "By their fruits ye shall know them." Ignorance, blindness, prejudice in a man are less blameworthy than conscious malice or deliberate cruelty; but they may be just as dangerous to human welfare. And there is no duty greater than what John Erskine calls The Moral Obligation to be Intelligent.

Why Not Be Selfish?

But why not intelligent selfishness? Is not the selfish

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 562ff.

man who hardens his heart and refuses to burden himself with responsibility for others freer to enjoy life than his conscientious and tender-hearted neighbour? After all, happiness is an individual matter; why should one person deprive himself of it for another? In a familiar myth of Plato we are told that a certain shepherd, Gyges, discovered a magic ring which, when turned on his finger, made him invisible. This invisibility made it possible for him to do all sorts of naughty deeds without being detected. And he proceeded forthwith to take advantage of so rare an opportunity. In so far as his naughtiness brought an aftermath of suffering upon himself, he was clearly imprudent and stupid. But why should we call it rational for him to have gone without something that would have given him pleasure, for the sake of some other person whose happiness he could not feel?

The first thing to point out is that our altruistic impulses are nearly as deep-rooted as our self-regarding impulses; they are, in fact, among the most ineradicable and persistent, and cannot be ignored by the normal man or woman with impunity. When ambition has palled, when passion has faded and self-indulgence has lost its tang, sympathy and shame persist. The only hope for a lasting freedom from internal discord lies in including the interests of others with our own, instead of excluding and antagonizing them.

Obviously such a life is far richer in joys. The loving husband redoubles his life by sharing his wife's interests, and as father lives again in each of his children. As neighbour and as patriot he shares the life of his community and his country. He wins the respect and affection of his family and his friends, he has his organic place in the group, his horizon extends far beyond his own personal concerns. The

normal man recognizes that though he has his selfish moods, he could find in a self-centred life no lasting satisfaction. He is made to live and laugh and love with other human beings; and only if he accepts his social responsibilities loyally and fulfils them faithfully can he have peace and harmony within his own heart. Thus the most enlightened and skilful selfishness would be—unselfishness.

> If men were rational in their conduct . . . intelligence would be enough to make the world almost a paradise. In the main, what is in the long run advantageous to one man is also advantageous to another. But men are actuated by passions which distort their view; feeling an impulse to injure others, they persuade themselve that it is to their interest to do so. They will not, therefore, act in the way which is in fact to their own interest unless they are actuated by generous impulses which make them indifferent to their own interest. This is why the heart is as important as the head.[4]

Life is too short, or our education too defective, for us to learn the lesson of the wisdom of altruism—at least, to learn it so thoroughly that we shall not forget it when our passion, our vanity, or our greed is aroused. The community, therefore, cannot count on the spontaneous altruistic impulses of its members; it must supply outer influences and sanctions. How best to do this is a big problem, the discussion of which we shall postpone to our final chapter. But in one way or another people must be made to *want* to be unselfish; or, so far as this is not feasible, to be afraid or ashamed to be selfish.

There have been a few rebellious and irritable spirits who

[4] Bertrand Russell, *Icarus*, p. 58.

have openly flouted altruism and glorified the primitive savage code of "every man for himself and the devil take the hindmost." Others, like Goethe, have frankly pursued a less arrogant but no less selfish plan of developing their own genius and enriching their own experience at no matter whose expense. If a man has sufficient genius, like Goethe, he may "get away with it," as we say, and win widespread admiration and honour. Indeed, there is something to be said for a selfish following of one's own star, if one can thereby create for the world such masterpieces of art as Goethe was perhaps thus helped to produce. But certainly there are few exceptions to the rule that selfishness, in the long run, does not pay; and to the further rule that society must see to it that at least its grosser forms are not *allowed* to pay.

It is not merely the selfishness of individuals against which we must guard, but the selfishness of groups. We must learn to think—as Christianity tried to make men think—not merely in terms of our immediate group, but in terms of humanity as a whole. For the "pooled self-esteem" of nations, or the self-interest of social classes, may have the most disastrous results. Family life, while developing mutual love and sacrifice within its narrow circle, may foster a very selfish attitude toward those without the circle. Business men, captains of industry, financiers, may work disinterestedly for the success of the group-undertaking to which they are devoting their individual strength and talent. Politicians may be completely loyal to their party interests. Kings and generals may devotedly serve what they take to be the interest of their own country. They may, and often do, become heroes to their groups; they are, indeed, usually the people to whom statues and memorials are erected, and whose names adorn the pages of history. But for all that,

they may be the worst enemies of human happiness. This is eminently true in the case of the instigators of wars, if they have conspicuous success. Napoleon, in spite of his criminal militarism, and the enormous amount of suffering he caused both his own people and those of other countries, in spite even of his ultimate failure and disgrace, is idolized by the majority of his countrymen, and pretty generally regarded everywhere as a great hero. The men who by their selfish nationalism brought on the great tragedy of 1914 have not suffered for the colossal harm they did, and, even if we were agreed as to which men were most to blame, would not receive any universal execration. In short, group-selfishness is the most dangerous sort of selfishness, not only because it can do most harm, but because its fundamental selfishness is masked by the loyalty that is aroused within the group. The greatest need of the "new morality" is to show, clearly and convincingly, that our highest duty is not our duty to further the interests of the particular group or party or nation to which we happen to belong, but our duty to further the interests of mankind as a whole, to work for the success of the great and precarious adventure of human life on earth.

CHAPTER V

FROM PURITANISM TO FREUD

The Attitude of Puritanism

THE sense of duty, we have seen, is a very valuable means to an end. It has been bred in us, by the unconscious processes of evolution, and by the conscious efforts of our moral teachers, to steer and push us into right conduct when such conduct crosses our immediate inclinations. The honour we give to men who do what they feel to be their duty is the premium we put upon conduct that is irksome but necessary, the special credit which we attach to it in order to counteract the lure of selfish or momentary desire. But the conception of duty may easily become distorted, and the pursuit of duty become an end instead of a means. When that happens, one of the noblest of human attributes becomes dangerous, and what should be the greatest friend of happiness is changed into one of its most serious foes. Morality becomes a Frankenstein's monster, which devours its creators. So it is with that development of human morals which, for convenience, we may call Puritanism.

There is much that is admirable in Puritanism. To take life earnestly, to give of your best, to have a serious purpose for which you are ready to "scorn delights and live laborious days," is to have found one of the secrets of successful living. But, as an old Latin proverb puts it, the worst things are perversions of the best things. What is, in due degree, good,

becomes, by assuming exaggerated emphasis, the enemy of the best. Thus our Puritan forbears, impressed with the importance of giving time and concentrated attention to the nurture of our highest aspirations and resolves, insisted that every one in the community dedicate Sunday to such ends, and allow himself no recreation, no amusement, even no healthful outdoor games, upon that day. So the humanitarian precept that work shall cease on one day in the week became a grim commandment that play too should cease. And this in spite of the fact that our records show both Jesus and St. Paul, whose words these Puritans reverenced as holy, to have vigorously opposed the sabbatarianism of their day! Jesus, the Gospels tell us, openly and repeatedly violated the sabbatarian rules of the pious; and it is a curious distortion of emphasis to suppose that a solemn and ascetic Sabbath is consonant with the gentle humanitarianism of the Founder. But the Puritan was a discriminating critic neither of history nor of life, and when obsessed by one idea could see nothing else. He was the slave of the particular set of supposed duties to which he was bred; it seemed to him self-evident that these were his—and everybody else's—duties. He utterly failed to realize that deep-rooted prejudices always have the appearance of self-evident truths, and that he was the victim of fixed ideas. The Puritan conceived life as a melodramatic struggle between good and evil, God and the Devil. But such a conception, though containing a splendid and inspiriting truth, is an over-simplification, ignoring the complexity of the moral problem and the infinitely various forms of human happiness. It ignores the note of simple, natural *joy* that runs through the Gospels, it ignores the kindly human *sympathy* of Jesus, who came

"that we might have life, and life more abundantly." Contrast the attitude of Jesus toward the woman taken in adultery (undoubtedly illustrative of his attitude, whether the story is historical or not), with Hawthorne's grim depiction of the Puritanic attitude in the *Scarlet Letter.* Surely Puritanism was moralism run mad.

Where life is conceived as primarily a moral battleground, the sex instinct, being among the most powerful and persistent of our inner drives, and the most universally seductive rival of the moral interest, is usually branded as the worst enemy of morality. Of the trinity, "the world, the flesh, and the Devil," the "world" is vague and the "Devil" difficult to locate; but the "flesh" is a plain object for attack. No wonder "carnal sin" becomes the root of evil. In lesser degree, other fleshly appetites are condemned, and all the lures that distract the soldier of the Lord from his militant attitude. Beauty and art are banned as enervating to the moral fibre; the most wholesome amusements and recreations are looked upon with suspicion. It is said that the English Puritans objected to bear-baiting not because it hurt the bears, but because it amused the people. However that may be, they certainly tended to conceive of sin not as *whatever injures some one needlessly,* but as *whatever needlessly gratifies the senses.*

We have already noted Bernard Shaw's trenchant phrase, "the sacrifice of people to principles." This well expresses the crux of the Puritan's sin against humanity. He is not sympathetic to human happiness, he is too eager for the triumph of his absolute and arbitrary principles. Danton, in Romain Rolland's play of that name, puts his finger on this evil when he says,

> There is no danger in any state so great as that of men with principles. They don't try to do good but to be in the right; no sufferings trouble them.

They are not guided by observation of the results of their moral despotism. Driven by their pitiless conscience they insist that hard and fast rules be obeyed, at whatever cost in deprivation and pain. Out of such a temper came the persecutions, the Crusades, the Inquisition, the image-breaking, the witch-baiting, the branding of "fallen women," and all the other horrors of religious history. What such people need is a surgical operation upon their conscience.

It is not difficult to trace the genesis of the various impulses and inhibitions which we lump together and call conscience. These inner checks and pushes have been a valuable instrument in integrating and pruning men's behaviour. But conscience very easily takes the bit in its mouth and runs away with us. The ascetic conscience, that drives us away from innocent and wholesome pleasures, the meddlesome conscience, that feels it a mission to stir up trouble, the anxious conscience, that gives its possessor no rest and poisons his whole life, the dogmatic conscience, that refuses to listen to criticism or objection—such perversions of a natural and useful function are a public nuisance and among the worst enemies of man. It is impossible to estimate how much human energy has been wasted and human happiness lost through these misdirected loyalties and this misguided zeal.

> Alas, their propagandas! How they have filled this world with hatred, darkness, and blood! How they are still the eternal obstacle, in every home and in every heart, to a simple happiness! [1]

[1] George Santayana, in *The Journal of Philosophy*, Vol. 18, p. 713.

The Exposé of Puritanism

However we may admire, in this rather soft and luxury-loving age, the heroic fibre of the Puritan, we must admit that he was often a pretty hard person to live with. The story has gone the rounds how, at a dinner in honour of the Pilgrims, some one proposed a toast in praise of the Pilgrim *mothers,* for having had to put up with the Pilgrim Fathers. The fact is, as some one has recently said, the Puritan hates so much of what he finds in himself, that he is bound to hate a great deal of what he finds in other people. He naturally reproves and exhorts those who do not share his ascetic standards or whose wills are too frail to live up to them consistently.

Worse than this, the sight of others enjoying pleasures which he denies himself tends to make him censorious and harsh. In such situations motives usually become mixed; jealousy and envy are very apt to enter in, though their possessor is quite unaware that they are influencing his conduct, and would indignantly repudiate the accusation. The pinched life and self-denying temper of the Puritan is a fertile seed-bed for such horrid attitudes, as well as for meanness, unkindness, and self-righteousness. One of the ironies of life is that the most earnest and aspiring people have often thus been really lower in the moral scale, as judged in the light of reason, than the more easy-going, self-indulgent, but generous, tolerant and kindly people whom they have regarded, perhaps, as hopelessly damned!

Moreover, the history of Puritanism shows the tragic futility, in the long run, of this repressive attitude. The Puritan understood neither the causes of wrong-doing nor its cure. He vented his indignation in *blame,* which is usually a sterile and impotent attitude; he did not know how

to *help*. Instead of studying mental hygiene, finding innocent outlets for pent-up desires, and dragging morbid complexes into the light of day, he pushed the normal, instinctive impulses down into that subconscious realm where they live to do infinite harm. It is, again, a naïve and false simplification to hold that wrong-doing springs, usually, from a perverse and unregenerate will. Most wrong-doing is the involuntary expression of inner drives that are little understood, often not even known to be present, by their unhappy victims. What we need normally is not thundering admonitions and censure, but self-knowledge, intelligence with respect to the consequences of acts, and the persuasive presentation of sane ideals in such a way that we shall fall in love with them and adopt them for our own.

The Puritan is, to use a modern term, introverted. He magnifies his moral struggles and is oppressed by his sins, till he cries "Who shall deliver me from this body of death?" It was by such minds that the doctrine was developed which holds that man can not train himself to a virtuous life, but must be saved, dramatically, once for all, by a supernatural Power. Profound emotional experiences and very real moral regenerations are expressed and transmitted by doctrines of this sort; and we must not underestimate the value of any means by which men have been able to solve their personal problems. But there is something morbid and egocentric about this concern with one's own salvation. "Sick souls" may need it. But the healthy and normal child should grow up to love people, to care for many things outside his own life, to have only incidental conflicts, not persistent and tragic conflicts, between his ideals and his desires. The Puritan at his worst was a sheer egotist, concerned more about the salvation of his soul than about the welfare of others, and

consuming his energies in internal warfare, often quite artificial and unnecessary. A very considerable percentage of these victims of inner conflict broke down, physically or mentally, under the strain. And a far larger number poisoned their own happiness and that of their loved ones by their ceaseless moral struggles.

In the words of one of the keenest contemporary critics of life:

> The older type of virtue, which left bad desires rampant, and merely used will-power to check their manifestations, has been found to afford a far from satisfactory method of controlling bad conduct. The bad desires, like a river which has been dammed, find some other outlet which has escaped the watchful eye of the will. . . . [There is] a tradition urging the cheap and easy way of repression: the saint must learn to renounce self, must mortify the flesh and forgo instinctive joys. This can be done, but its consequences are bad. Having renounced pleasure for himself, the ascetic saint renounces it for others also, which is easier. Envy persists underground, and leads him to the view that suffering is ennobling, and may therefore be legitimately inflicted. Hence arises a complete inversion of values: what is good is thought bad, and what is bad is thought good.[2]

One of the saddest results of Puritanism is the discredit which it brings upon morality and religion. This virtue so refrigerated and inhuman, this duty so harsh and unlovely, repel the lover of humanity, repel any eager and unspoiled youth, who knows that beauty is good, and love, and life. On the one side he sees morality, dreary, unlovely, drab;

[2] Bertrand Russell, *On Education*, pp. 35, 54.

CHURCH DIVINITY SCHOOL of the PACIFIC LIBRARY

on the other side the gay, free, and colourful world. Many an unhappy person lives his life long as a divided self, torn between the conflicting claims of these two realms. What is needed is to make morality and religion responsive to all that is sweet and alluring to the natural man, to make them generous and warm, sympathetic and joyous, while keeping the spirit of brotherhood and the wisdom of necessary restraint. Youth *should* be flaming and adventurous and gay; a religion that frowns on the abundant life is a canker in the community, and is clearly not Christian. Certainly this flame needs to be tempered, this adventurousness to be kept from becoming irresponsible, this gaiety from becoming cruel or self-destructive. Morality must *govern* the world of impulse. But every impulse, every natural desire, must have full weight of representation. Morality should be not autocratic but democratic, ruling in no alien interest, but simply in the interest of the total man as against a single impulse, and in the interest of the community as against a single man. Morality should be earnest, and stern when necessary; but it should temper its severity with generous sympathy, with kindness, common sense—and a sense of humour.

It is the Jewish race, historically, or rather, a few of their moralists who reacted against the general moral laxness of their fellows, who have made *righteousness* seem the all-important thing. And in the contemporary world it is the Anglo-Saxons, more than any other race, perhaps, who have taken up this concept, who admire moral earnestness above all else. But how is it that they so often forget their Master's teaching that the heart of righteousness is love? . . . The Puritan needs to learn that love, charity, *kindness,* is the supreme virtue. He needs to learn that it is not enough for a man to follow his sense of what is right, if he is making

a fool of himself or doing harm to another. Such a man is not a *good* man. There is no reason for calling a character "good" unless it is of the sort to make for concrete *goods.* In short, what the Puritan needs, is not more zeal but more sympathy and more insight; in Matthew Arnold's famous phrase, he needs to temper his Hebraism with Hellenism. People of the Puritan temper, said Arnold,

> have not enough added to their care for walking staunchly by the best light they have, a care that that light be not darkness. . . . To walk staunchly by the best light one has, to be strict and sincere with oneself, not to be of the number of those who say and do not, to be in earnest . . . this discipline has been nowhere so effectively taught as in the school of Hebraism. . . . But what if rough and coarse action, ill-calculated action, action with insufficient light, is, and has for a long time been, our bane? What if our urgent want now is, not to act at any price, but rather to lay in a stock of light for our difficulties. . . . Now, and for us, it is a time to Hellenize, and to praise knowing; for we have Hebraised too much, and have over-valued doing.[8]

To avoid the blight of Puritanism, we must clearly recognize that the sacrifice of pleasure, of whatever sort, or the incurring of pain, is always in itself an evil. Sacrifice is not desirable for its own sake, but only when it is necessary to obtain a greater good; the sacrifice must *benefit* somebody, or it is sheer loss and wicked cruelty.

Is Suppression of Desires Always Bad?

The reaction against Puritanism has been violent. The

[8] Matthew Arnold, *Culture and Anarchy,* xiv, xiii, 42.

sophisticated intelligentsia have been so impressed by its dangers that they have swung to the other extreme. In particular, Freud and his disciples have shown in such detail the harm done by repression of natural impulses, that the deduction has been commonly made that every passion and appetite must be gratified. The very term "suppression" seems in itself to settle the question; for in our liberty-loving age it has an unwelcome and sinister sound. And it is true that all sorts of hysterias, morbid neuroses, and serious illnesses have been shown to be due to the effects of repression. But we must not lose our heads over the matter and draw the conclusion that we are justified, on grounds of mental hygiene, in giving free rein to our desires.

In fact, there is a sharp distinction, which is commonly ignored, between "suppression" and "repression." To *suppress* a desire is to recognize it as dangerous, to restrain its expression through watchfulness and self-control. To *repress* a desire is to thrust it down into the unconscious, to forget it, at the same time that one is actually subject to its influence. Conscious, intelligent *suppression* of desires seldom leads to gruesome results. Suppression is, as a matter of fact, an almost daily occurrence for most people, and solves their moral problems with no more tragic concomitant than some measure of wistfulness or restlessness or heaviness of heart. The desire denied expression in act at least has a hearing, and usually, so to speak, accepts the verdict. Persistent restraint atrophies an impulse by disuse, while the better impulses grow in strength through exercise. In some such way moral education must largely proceed.

Repression, on the other hand, leads to the unwholesome state in which you do not recognize your own motives. You are ashamed to acknowledge, even to yourself, that you are

jealous; instead of taking intelligent measures to overcome your jealousy, you ignore it. You strenuously deny it. Such a person as you, with your high ideals *wouldn't* be jealous! Yet the jealousy persists, underground, gnawing at your happiness, perhaps at your physical health, and manifesting itself to a keen observer in a hundred ways. A skilled psychiatrist who saw you for the first time in his office would be able to tell you within an hour that you were sick with jealousy. . . . A man is in love with his friend's wife. His loyalty and his code of morals forbid him to recognize the fact. . . . A young girl is in a stage of feverish sexual desire. She would die rather than admit it, even to herself. . . . A woman hates another woman. She is sweet as honey to her, and is satisfied that she is a good Christian. But her hatred comes out in some tart remark, some witty sally (which was supposedly only the inevitable result of her irresistible wit, though it did have a sting to it), in her irritable mood when the other woman is successful or admired (though the irritation may seem to have quite other objects), in her good spirits (quite unaccountable—she probably "got up on the right side of the bed") when the other woman meets with disaster.

It is cases like these that bring on the hysterias and morbid neuroses of which abnormal psychology has been telling us so much. The trouble is due not so much to the control of powerful instincts as to the bungling technique of control. We are animals, beset with primitive passions and appetites. It pays to recognize the situation frankly, and with good humour, instead of agonizing over the fact that we are not angels. It pays, because it is only a clear understanding of our weaknesses that will free us from their grip. Human nature can be educated into a state very remote from primi-

tive animalism without producing a "divided self" or a neurotic condition, if the situation is frankly faced and a skilful technique is used.

In many cases dangerous impulses may be "sublimated": the lust of sex may grow into a chivalrous devotion to woman, the combative spirit that leads to war may be diverted into a life-long fight against the forces that make for war, the child's tendency to handle animals to their hurt may be developed into a tender care of pets.

But we must admit that even when an impulse has been given outlet in sublimated form, we are not necessarily freed from the more primitive desire. It would be over-sanguine to expect that by giving outlet to the combative instinct in sports and athletic games we could prevent the danger of war. A boy may be diverted from the craving for sensual books or shows, to an interest in books and plays that are wholesome, and an interest in normal friendship with girls. But the lure of the sensual and the obscene may persist, nevertheless; it may be precisely that which, at that stage, has for him the greatest appeal. Dancing may be one of the most innocently delightful of recreations, or it may powerfully inflame sexual desire. The innocent manner of dancing gives complete satisfaction to most people, but may quite fail to satisfy one whose enjoyment lies in the other sort. . . . So it is unwarrantably optimistic to suppose, as some of the Freudians do, that in every case of desire there is something that will *satisfy* the desire without bringing any bad results. No, it remains true that if we are to avoid bringing unhappiness upon ourselves and upon others, we must be prepared to deny ourselves some things that we want. In so far, the Puritans were right.

In any normal person the practice of "unrestraint" leads,

actually, to the restraining of the prudential and altruistic impulses. These impulses in their turn may be repressed, unacknowledged, ignored. But the frankly immoral person has this other side to his nature, though he fail to recognize it. He becomes as restless and unsatisfied as the man who has followed his ideals while repressing his physical cravings. This is not an artificial situation, brought on because he is not yet wholly free from the tyranny of tradition, it is simply the reverse of the sort of conflict that the apostle of freedom is seeking to avoid. Yielding blindly to the animal side of our nature is no better in its psychological effects, and very likely much worse in its total effects, than following blindly an ideal code which ignores our bodily needs.

> Whereas, before, sex was repressed and the moral sense dominant, now sex is dominant and the moral sense is denied and repressed. This does not solve the problem; it merely substitutes one form of repression for another, and a worse one; for it is one in which the self as a whole is overpowered by one instinct. The experience simply makes a man sick with himself.[4]

There are some impulses so inimical to human welfare that there is no compromising with them, no sublimating them: cruelty in all its forms, the zest in teasing, nagging, bullying, and torturing, the enjoyment in the sight of blood and death-agonies, which you can see at any bull-fight in Spain, and in any war, sadism and masochism and other abnormalities, as well as the commoner sins of envy, jealousy, and malice. Such impulses must be rooted out, or kept in chains. We are much indebted to Freud and his school for showing us the need of skill, when we are dealing with

[4] J. A. Hadfield, *Psychology and Morals*, p. 132.

deep-rooted and dangerous passions. Obviously it is desirable to work with instinct whenever we can, rather than against it. Instead of a wholesale repudiation of the natural man, we should seek to divert energy into safe channels, to steer impulses to useful ends, to thwart human nature as little as possible, and to let every one live as richly and abundantly as is compatible with kindness and prudence. But we must not lose our nerve, or hesitate to say *no* to our desires when they run amuck.

> Our culture, therefore, must not omit the arming of the man. Let him hear in season, that he is born into a state of war, and the commonwealth and his own well-being require that he should not go dancing in the weeds of peace. . . . To this military attitude of the soul we give the name of Heroism. . . . Whoso is heroic will always find crises to try his edge.[5]

We want no unnecessary pinching of life, no asceticism, no intolerance. But life sooner or later demands sacrifices from us all; and those sacrifices we must be ready and willing to make. Self-control is one of the most important of the virtues; and we must ever be grateful for the Puritan strain in our inheritance.

[5] Emerson, Essay on *Heroism*.

PART TWO

SOME QUESTIONABLE ASPECTS OF CURRENT MORALITY

The chapters which follow point out some of the more important moral problems that arise in contemporary life and some of the commoner forms of conduct which must, by our standard, be judged immoral.

CHAPTER VI

SELF-INDULGENCE AND LUXURY

The Pursuit of Personal Happiness

HAVING made clear the standard by which we shall criticize conduct, we turn now to consider Twentieth Century morals. What can we find that, in the light of our standard, is questionable? And first as to the matter of personal happiness. There is no "right to be happy," where that happiness involves suffering or deprivation for others. But in a well-regulated society such conflicts are incidental rather than normal. In general, it is not only our right but our duty to be as happy as our obligations to others, and our unavoidable misfortunes, permit. Much of the gloom and depression of spirits from which people suffer is due to mere laziness and stupidity. People will take so little trouble to cultivate the technique of happiness!

Advice in this quest of happiness is to be found on every hand, very diverse, very confusing. It largely consists, however, in the elaboration of a few themes: (1) Keep yourself, by vigorous effort and self-control, in the best possible bodily health. (2) Find positive interests to which you can devote yourself with your whole heart; train yourself for your vocation, so that you can put yourself into it with zest; develop other interests, outside of your vocation, to enlist your spare energies and talents. (3) Learn to take troubles lightly, as an unavoidable part of the colour of life, with courage for

the real sorrows and a sense of humour for the minor misfortunes. (4) Keep alive your sense of the wonder of conscious life, the infinitely various beauty and interest to be found on every hand in this colourful "movie" of human experience that passes before us. . . . Any one who will take these four precepts seriously to heart and persistently apply them can, with normal good fortune, live a reasonably happy life. There will be bad hours, of course; unbroken happiness is too much to expect. But much of the unhappiness from which men suffer is unnecessary. They are only half well, and will not take the trouble to get into better condition. They have nothing that interests them steadily, nothing that draws out the best that is in them. They fret and worry over their troubles, and make them thereby much worse than they need be. And they are unresponsive to this marvelous and inexplicable boon which, for a brief time, is given to us all, the boon of *consciousness.*

The Epicureans, more consciously than any other group of people, perhaps, set about mastering the art of happiness. Of Epicurus himself we know little; he is said to have been a charming and lovable person, the author of voluminous works, all of which have unhappily been lost. But his name has been given to a frankly pleasure-seeking philosophy of life, which has much that is attractive and sensible in it. This teaching bids us cease living on a strain, refuse to worry about what we cannot help, and enjoy contentedly such simple pleasures as come to hand. We are to avoid responsibilities, let the world wag as it will, but warm our hearts with congenial friendships, with good books, music, flowers, and all the other normal satisfactions that involve us in no rivalries, no anxieties, and no regrets. Through it all we are never to forget that

"We are living, living, you and I!"

Browning's Pippa expresses this exultation in what the day may bring, in her gay determination to

"Waste no wavelet of her twelve hours' treasure."

This elemental zest in living is surely one of the basic virtues. It is, indeed, not to be expected of those who are in pain or under the shadow of some great sorrow. But if we are willing to stop expecting too much of life and whining because we do not get all we want, if we will cultivate a humble contentment with the imperfect, and a sense of humour that can override discomforts and disappointments, we can learn to savour the infinitely varying flavour of the ever-changing hours, to say with the Persian poet Hafiz,

> Every pleasant moment that cometh to your hand
> Score up as an invaluable prize,

and to find, with Stevenson, that

> The world is so full of a number of things,
> I'm sure we should all be as happy as kings.

Another, less familiar, passage of Stevenson's puts this ideal well:

> Let us by all means fight against the hidebound stolidity of sensation and sluggishness of mind which blurs and decolourizes for poor natures the wonderful pageant of consciousness. Let us teach people as much as we can to enjoy, and they will learn for themselves to sympathize; but let us see to it above all that we give these lessons in a brave vivacious note and build the man up in courage while we demolish its substitute indifference.

To this we may add the following from the pen of a contemporary writer:

> A pitiably meager world it is we most of us inhabit, filled with things stereotyped by many repetitions, and shorn of all that makes them unique. And yet that world is actually one of kaleidoscopic variety, full of iridescences in the very mud of the streets, and with everlasting movement of light and shadow every instant making new and unfamiliar the entire creation. Some measure of the artist's absorption in the moment, and the strange enchantment of that absorption, might without prejudice to our intellect be sought by every one of us.

So far as it goes, this is admirable teaching. But it is obvious that it must be supplemented by a teaching that will show us how to avoid the pitfalls of life. Enjoyment of the good things of life easily becomes reckless self-indulgence, and not even refinement of taste can be depended upon to escape that danger. Moreover, pleasure-loving is bound sooner or later to pall unless it remains a mere running accompaniment to, or a temporary vacation from, some deeper and more serious *purpose*. The happiest lives are those that are built upon a base of steady and faithful work, and a genuine interest in the welfare of other people. The Epicurean is too aimless and too self-centred to know the deepest joys of life. Moreover, in so far as he shirks his responsibilities to others, he is selfish; and selfishness is the cardinal sin. An enduring happiness for man cannot be built up in any such atomic way; it must be patiently constructed by common effort and co-operation.

Most men cannot shirk, if they would, their share of the world's work. They have their livings to earn. And they

find themselves, before they realize it, with a family on their hands, with neighbourhood problems that arouse their interest, with politics and patriotism an intermittent background. But in so far as men have money and freedom they are very apt to look upon self-indulgence as their right. As America becomes more prosperous, this tendency becomes more and more marked.[1] We must ask, then, Why and when is "self-indulgence" wrong?

When Is Self-Indulgence Wrong?

Self-indulgence is not wrong, as the Puritans thought, for the reason that carnal pleasures are intrinsically sinful. It is wrong only when, and in so far as, it stands in the way of our own fundamental needs or of our duties to other people.

It needs no argument to condemn those forms of self-indulgence which are sappers of health. Probably no single thing is of more importance for personal happiness and for usefulness to others than health; it is a poor bargain to barter it for the transient pleasures of dissipation. It actually does not pay in pleasure for one's self; and it is unfair to the community, which does so much for the individual and deserves in return his fullest service. Very many people, however, fall into habits which, though not commonly labelled vices, impair vitality. If the impairment is serious, these habits should be called vices. Whether they are so labelled by common usage is beside the point; a habit that causes serious harm to oneself is a vice, and our morality must catch up with the facts. To weaken seriously one's usefulness (not to speak of one's personal happiness) by bad health-habits is, in its degree, immorality.

[1] For a scathing commentary on the life of the contemporary "smart set," see Arthur Train, *The Goldfish* (The Century Co., 1915).

Health is, of course, by no means wholly within our control; and illness or physical weakness does not necessarily imply any immorality. Moreover, we must not be meticulous or censorious about these matters. The normal human body is tough, and we should be prigs to be forever coddling ourselves and afraid to enjoy life freely from day to day in normal ways. We may even sympathize with Edna St. Vincent Millay's charming quatrain:

> I burn my candle at both ends;
> It will not last the night.
> But ah! my foes, and oh! my friends,
> It gives a lovely light!

But such an attitude is obviously dangerous, and to be adopted very gingerly. Any one who has known what Emerson called "plus health" knows that to enjoy that is worth a great deal of the hectic pleasure of burning one's candle at both ends.

Another form of self-indulgence is protracted idleness. There is still an enormous amount of work to be done to make this earth a comfortable place for man to live upon; we need better roads, better homes, better waterways, power-plants to develop water-power, and a thousand other things. And the work of feeding, clothing, educating people, and ministering to their myriad needs, is endless. Every idle person is a shirker, who leaves his share of this work for others to do. It is not always easy to draw the line between productive leisure, the leisure necessary for creative work in art, literature, and invention, and mere sterile laziness. Nor is it easy to say how long vacations, how many days or weeks of enjoyable idleness, a man or woman may conscientiously take. Work of the more intense and fatiguing sort requires

longer periods of rest. And work of the more disagreeable sort deserves longer periods of rest, in compensation. But the existence of a merely decorative "leisure class" is now almost everywhere recognized as anti-social and immoral.

Actual idleness soon becomes tedious to the normal human being. But there are possible today so many forms of enjoyable activity, crude and refined, that people with independent incomes may easily be tempted to pass their time without productive work. Reading the current books and magazines, going to plays and "shows," or to the "movies," playing the piano, entertaining friends, going to dances and parties, motoring, travelling in Europe or round the world—these pleasures are legitimate when they accompany, or come as a recess in the midst of, honest work. But if they usurp a person's main energies they become selfish indulgence. Happily in America even the richest men are usually ashamed to live a life of entire leisure. But upper-class women, who have servants to do their house-work, to considerable extent spend their days in a round of futile "social engagements" and amusements. The old idea that a husband must "support" his wife, while obviously applicable to the situation in which the wife bears and brings up children, prepares the meals, and keeps the house clean, is not in place where a wife has servants to do the house-work and care for the children. The problem of finding useful work to do is harder for the married woman than for men or unmarried women. But it is necessary to emphasize the fact that one does not acquire by being married a moral right of exemption from the universal obligation to do one's share of the necessary work of the world.

Whatever we may think about other aspects of Bolshevism,

we should recognize that the Bolshevists have attempted to incorporate into their State an important moral principle never before explicitly adopted on a nation-wide scale, the principle of the obligation of every able-bodied adult to do some sort of productive work. The constitution of the Russian Soviet Republic, adopted July 10, 1918, contains the following declaration:

> The universal obligation to work is introduced, for the purpose of eliminating the parasitic strata of society. . . . The Russian Soviet Republic considers work the duty of every citizen of the Republic, and proclaims as its motto, He shall not eat who does not work.

This is good Biblical doctrine. And while to approve of the principle does not necessarily imply an approval of the concrete legislation intended to put it into effect—much less an approval of other aspects of the Bolshevist programme—we should be churlish and narrow-minded not to do honour to this serious attempt to demand from every able-bodied person, man or woman, rich or poor, a fair return in useful work for the capital that has been invested in bringing him or her to the age of productivity and in keeping him or her alive and comfortable.

Is Luxury Morally Justifiable?

Another, and, in our society, far commoner form of self-indulgence consists in the expenditure of money on needless luxuries, and in mere waste and extravagance. No people in history have had so much money to spend as we people of the United States have today. Small groups of upper-class people have lived extravagantly, but never before has the lavishly spending class been numbered by the million.

Luxurious standards of clothing, food, and pleasure-seeking are contagious; and many people of very moderate incomes are spending far too large a proportion of them upon pretty clothes, good things to eat, and costly amusements. According to government returns for 1920, the people of our country were spending then for what the census-compilers classified as luxuries over twenty-two billion dollars a year. Our annual tobacco-bill (including accessories) is in the neighbourhood of two billion dollars; the bill for candy is not far from that. What the government reports classify as "luxurious service" consumes about three billions and needlessly luxurious clothing about five billions. Perfumes, cosmetics, etc., run close to two billions, pleasure-resorts, races, etc., take another two billions, pleasure-automobiles, movies, and soft drinks take somewhere about a billion dollars apiece, jewelry about half a billion. A considerable amount of this money is sheer waste; changing styles in clothing are responsible for much waste; and as for food, it is said that Paris could live on what New York wastes.

The figures given above are doubtless far from accurate; but they are quite near enough to the truth for our purposes. We have to postpone all sorts of needed public works for lack of money. We have in our midst millions of people who are suffering for lack of sufficient food and clothing for their actual needs, or are living crowded together in homes unfit for human habitation. There is not an adequate national income to supply all the *needs* of our people, yet we spend something over twenty billions of dollars a year on *luxuries*.

The moral principle involved has been stated over and over again by the great moralists and religious leaders. A few contemporary expressions may be cited:

> [Every man should] take out of the share of wealth that comes to him only as much as he needs, to realize the essentials of a truly human existence, to maintain himself at the highest standard of efficiency in doing his work. . . . [He] should spend only up to the limit of his proper human needs, devoting the surplus to the promotion of progressive social movements in the right direction.[2]

> It ought to be pointed out [to the rich man] in no uncertain manner that his luxuries, his grand houses, his motors of super-power, his yachts, his country places, his reserved pews in the choice parts of the church, his liveried servants, his gorgeous entertainments, are simple but patent evidences to all the world that his religion amounts to very little. It is inconceivable that Christ could, in a world filled with suffering and misery and want, live blatantly and contentedly in modern luxury.[3]

> A future generation will ask with amazement how it ever came to be thought that the possession of vast wealth and luxurious habits of living were consistent with a profession of Christianity while slums and rags remained.[4]

The above quotations are addressed to the rich, and two of them are addressed to professed Christians. But the duty of restricting needless expenditures upon oneself and one's own family is a humanitarian duty, not merely a Christian duty. And it applies to waste, extravagance, and self-indulgence not merely among the rich but among the middle classes, and

[2] Felix Adler, *The World Crisis*, pp. 167-172.
[3] B. I. Bell, *Right and Wrong after the War*, p. 52.
[4] R. J. Campbell, *The War and the Soul*, p. 115.

even among the poor themselves. The ideal consumption of wealth would, of course, be that which procured the greatest attainable happiness. Luxurious expenditure, waste, extravagance, and harmful or habitual self-indulgence are inefficient ways of consuming the national wealth. The same amount of money would procure more happiness if consumed in the form of necessities for more people. The British Labour Party recently translated this principle into a formula for practical politics when it announced the slogan "No cake for any one till all have bread."

It is not a simple problem, however, to determine the most efficient ways of spending money. We must seek to maintain a high standard of living, not merely to keep an increasing number of people alive; for it is not the numbers of living people that count, but the quality of their lives. And it is well that there should be a sufficient difference between the scale of living of the better-paid workers and the poorer-paid to spur the latter to work for promotion. But how draw the line between a desirably high and beautiful standard of living, on the one hand, and unwarranted self-indulgence, on the other hand? Doubtless we should urge the spending of money rather for articles that last long and give comfort and happiness to a number of people, such as well-built and pleasant homes, good furniture, rugs, pictures, and books, than for such transient and personal pleasures as those of expensive food and clothing, and the various indulgences, such as drinking and smoking. The money spent in these latter ways would certainly bring more happiness if spent (for example) for better housing for the poor, better care for the sick among the poor, or better education for all.

It is not in the interests of an ascetic Puritanism that we

would urge self-limitation in spending money, it is not, primarily, because luxurious living is bad for the soul (though there is often truth in that observation), but because we are lovers of human happiness, and long to see a more *diffused* happiness than is possible where an Epicurean irresponsibility, a self-indulgent selfishness, leads those who have more than they need to spend it in extravagance and luxury. The possession of wealth is a great boon; it permits leisure for education, it permits freedom of thought and speech and action. There are unlimited opportunities open to the man of means for helping his fellows and thereby warming his own heart. It is a lack of imagination and sympathy that leads people to whom this wonderful opportunity comes to squander it in lavish personal expenditures which add little real joy to their lives. If they had been rightly educated (or if they were truly Christian in spirit) such stupid self-indulgence would be as repugnant to their taste as it would be abhorrent to their sense of honour.

CHAPTER VII

LAWLESSNESS AND CRIME

Under What Circumstances Is It Right to Break a Law?

It needs no argument to prove that in a complex society there must be a complex code of laws for the general guidance, and that it is highly necessary to the general happiness that these laws be obeyed. Even if specific laws seem unfair or inexpedient to an individual or a group, the way to correct the evil is to cause them to be repealed rather than to disobey them. The breaking of a law not only nullifies, in so far, whatever good it was intended to secure, but sets a dangerous precedent. Lawlessness is highly contagious; and if you and I can disregard one law with impunity, others will be encouraged to disobey whatever thwarts their desires. So we must all play the game by the rules.

In general. But are there no exceptions? Probably every one will agree that there are. And the interesting problem is to find, if we can, some generalization that will cover the exceptions which a rational morality would countenance, some law that will tell us when we may break a law.

We have here a type of moral problem which is very common: We must balance the good to be secured in a concrete case against the harm done by violating a code. Let us consider a few instances.

A person is seriously injured. A motorist breaks the speed law to carry him as quickly as possible to the hospital.

He runs a risk of doing harm to others, which the speed law was designed to prevent. He sets an example of law-breaking which others, unaware of his imperious reason, may be encouraged to imitate. But the concrete good to be attained by breaking the law is so great that any humane person would consider it justified.

If we had lived in the North during the time of the Fugitive Slave Law, and had felt, as many northerners did, that it was an inhumane and infamous law, we should have thought it right to break it.

If a war is declared which we believe unjust and unwarranted (or if, indeed, we believe all war under modern conditions to be wrong), and if we are drafted into service, our consciences will tell us to refuse to serve. If war (or that particular war) *is* wicked, we shall certainly be doing right in opposing it and in refusing to take part in it.

In the United States there are laws forbidding the giving of information concerning birth control. Suppose you know a married woman who, because of general ill-health or some specific trouble, runs serious risk of death if she has a child. Or suppose she has some serious inheritable defect or disease, so that on eugenic grounds she ought not to have a child. Or suppose she already has as many children as she and her husband can properly care for and support. If you can give her advice that will help her, without injury, to avoid conception, will you not do so, in spite of the law?

There is no way of accurately measuring the concrete good to be attained in a given situation against the subtle, far-reaching ill effects that lawlessness tends to bring into being. We must, in the end, use our individual judgment. But there are several useful things that may be said. In the first place, we must guard against the strength of our *desire* to do

what the law forbids. It is very easy to rationalize our desires and think that we are actuated by a noble motive, as in the case of violators of the prohibition law, who sometimes think themselves motivated by a disinterested zeal for liberty when they are obviously actuated by a perfectly selfish desire for the enjoyments of drinking. If we break a law we must be sure that we are doing it conscientiously, because we believe the law to be seriously wrong (at least as applied to the particular case), not because we chafe under it or long for what we find ourselves denied. And our conscientious conviction must be the fruit of sober reflection. No one has a moral right to break any law until he has seriously and unselfishly thought the matter through and considered the reasons why the law was passed, and what is its *raison d'être.*

In the second place, we must be willing to stand by our guns, to acknowledge that we have broken the law and, if necessary, to pay the penalty. For only in this way can we be sure that our lawlessness is conscientious rather than merely impulsive or selfish. The conscientious objector who deliberately chooses punishment, and very likely obloquy, rather than obey what he considers a wicked law, commands at least our respect, if not our approval. But the man who breaks a law in an underhanded way, and hopes to "get away with it," is deserving of no respect whatever. Lawbreaking is a serious matter. It is far too common in our society; and unless we put our weight against it, it may become a much more serious menace to our society than it now is. So if we venture to break any law it should be either because the concrete situation is so exceptional that we have no shame in acknowledging that we have broken it (as in the case of the motorist), or because we are so

convinced of the wickedness of the law that we believe ourselves justified in attempting, by open violation of it, to help break down its prestige and secure its repeal. All other lawbreaking must be considered not only legally but morally as *crime*.

Is It Ever Right to Use Violence to Attain An End?

The word "lawlessness" often connotes violence. But certainly it is one thing to refuse to obey a law and quite another thing to use unlawful violence to attain an end. Is this latter course ever moral?

We must distinguish between the various forms of violence. For instance, there is the assassination of a tyrant, which has often seemed to ardent lovers of liberty a glorious deed. But we cannot let any individual or group judge whether the death of an individual would serve the general happiness. Only with all the safeguards of the law, the defence by a trained lawyer and the unanimous judgment of a jury, can the death of any individual be decreed with any assurance of justice. Even with those safeguards, innocent men have been executed; and it is very doubtful if capital punishment is ever socially expedient. As for assassination, when we remember that it has deprived mankind of leaders of the greatest value, such as Julius Cæsar and Abraham Lincoln, we realize that men must not dare to trust their private judgment in so serious a matter as deciding that a man shall die.

Political revolution is the gravest form of violence. It always involves great suffering and economic loss, and these become more and more serious as the weapons of warfare become more and more deadly. Revolution is to be approved only when conditions are intolerable and no peaceful rem-

edy can be found. In a democracy any change desired by a large enough majority can be made; in a democracy, therefore, there should be no appeal from the ballot to the bullet.

The use of illegal force by rulers is a commoner phenomenon, and is often justified by believers in *Realpolitik.* In the last few years we have witnessed striking examples of this policy in Russia and Italy. Indeed, we had a little wave of it in our own country following the War; but nothing to compare with the violent methods of the Bolshevists or the Fascists. The argument is, that where ignorance or restlessness or dangerous radicalism prevails a "firm hand" is needed to preserve order, to make the "right" policy prevail, to build up, or preserve, a just and efficient civilization. It is thought of as a temporary expedient; and if high-handed methods are ever to be approved, it will be only when the rulers are at the same time sincerely working to educate the people in self-government. Even so, a policy of terrorism is bound to cause great and undeserved suffering and to provoke violent opposition. There are, of course, all degrees of violence. If a dictator seems to be honestly seeking his country's good, and not his own glory, if a party which maintains its power by force seems to be the only group capable of bringing order out of chaos, we may be content to see liberty sacrificed temporarily to security and progress. But a policy of force successfully pursued is very apt to go to greater and greater lengths to stifle opposition; and it may always be gravely questioned whether a temporary increase in social order or economic efficiency is worth the price. Certainly where, as in our own country, democratic institutions and popular education are firmly established, an attempted dictatorship by any person or party would be

fiercely resented; and it is only the most critical emergency that could possibly justify it.

The cases which we have been discussing are relatively rare. Far commoner is the use of violence by special groups within a state, for the purpose of securing special ends. A few years ago the "suffragettes" used all sorts of petty forms of violence, particularly in England, to advertise their cause and secure the vote for women. Mrs. Pankhurst, one of the leaders in this movement, thus justified such action, in her autobiography: "The women of England are the victims of intolerable oppression. Under such oppressions men have always delivered themselves, when argument didn't work, by force. Women are proceeding to profit by their example."

The poorly pair and overworked labouring classes, the under-dogs in our social order, are the group that we should naturally expect to be oftenest using extra-legal methods to remedy their grievances; and the wonder is that there is so little active rebellion. Jefferson once wrote, "I hold a little rebellion is a good thing." And Mr. G. K. Chesterton has recently said, "The English poor are harried and insecure, with insufficient instinct for armed revolt."

From the pens of radical labour leaders themselves we may quote the following declarations:

> There is so little justice towards our class that we will have to change our tactics . . . and then the authorities will have more respect for us. We will have to use more direct action.
>
> To expect us to keep to the rules of the game is to expect us to fight our enemies on their own ground.
>
> The question of the use of violence in the labour war is wholly a question of policy, of expediencey, of tactics,

> not a question of ethics, as it seems to be in the minds of moralistic socialists. . . . There are a few cases in which the use of force contrary to law has resulted favourably for the workers. . . . What friend of labour, except a chicken-hearted socialist, can fail to approve them or to advocate similar acts under similar conditions? [1]

But happily nearly all labour leaders in America recognize that "direct action," under conditions existing in this country, does not pay.

> The truth is, conditions very seldom arise under which workers can gain anything by resorting to arms or violence of any kind.
>
> The first answer to the question, what shall we do? is a negative. We shall not resort to open or furtive violence. Those to whom an ethical reason is sufficient need not be urged to refrain from it. Those who see in it a means of advancement should be satisfied that the best to be hoped from it is temporary gain, certain to be followed by punishment for the guilty and disaster for the movement. The two reasons together should control us all.[2]

As a matter of fact, we have in recent years witnessed more violence used *against* than *by* groups of labourers and radicals. For example:

> In 1919, the office of the *New York Call,* a socialist paper, was raided by a band of soldiers and sailors who drove out the men and women who were attending a reception there. The remaining soldiers and sailors,

[1] The long quotation is from John Macy, *Socialism in America,* p. 169ff.
[2] John Macy, *loc. cit.* A. J. Portenar, *Organized Labor.*

according to the report in the *New York Times,* "formed a semi-circle in front of the building, and as the people emerged the men in uniform struck them with clubs."

On May Day, 1919, a Socialist parade was proceeding peaceably, under legal sanction, in Cleveland, Ohio. The American flag was displayed with the red flag, in conformity to the law. The paraders were attacked by soldiers and citizens. The police, instead of upholding the legal rights of the paraders, favoured the law-breakers and arrested only the Socialists, thus encouraging the citizens to attack the paraders. The newspapers of Cleveland generally praised the assailants and the mayor is reported to have called them real patriots.

Any number of meetings of radicals and semi-radicals have been broken up by that self-constituted censor of political ideas, the American Legion. For instance, the *Kansas City Times* records the fact that the members of the American Legion at Great Bend, Kansas, swooped down upon a picnic held by the Non-Partisan League at Ellinwood on June 1, 1920, broke up the picnic, kidnapped the speakers, carried them off in motor-cars and enjoined them, with dire threats, not to return to the State.

The Non-Partisan Leader reported in 1921 that during the two preceding years "there have been over 200 authenticated cases of violations of the Constitution, deportations, rotten-egging, beating and stoning of farmers, tar-and-feathering, lynching, destruction of property by mobs, yellow painting of houses and autos, turning fire-hoses on men and women at peaceful meetings, and other persecutions, concerning which the big daily press has been practically silent and for which not a single individual has been punished, under the policy

of Governor Burnquist, who has even permitted connivance of peace officers in these crimes.

In Arizona, at Bisbee, and again at Gallup, without any warrant of law, bands of striking miners, guilty of no act against the public peace, were rounded up by the hired thugs of the employers, carried far out into the desert, and dumped there, to find their way back as best they could.

Finally, to cap this random collection of anecdotes, an editorial on the Christmas Spirit, from the *Washington Post,* Washington, D. C., Christmas, 1920: "At Christmastide old memories soften the heart. Holy teachings are remembered afresh as thoughts run back to childhood. The world does not seem so bad when seen through the mist of half-happy, half-sad recollections of loved ones now with God. No heart is untouched by the mysterious influence. . . . The country is honeycombed with red propaganda—but there is a good supply of ropes, muscles and lampposts."

In addition to this violence resulting from the anti-radical hysteria, we have witnessed the cruelties practiced by the Ku Klux Klan and its imitators, against negroes, Jews, Catholics, foreigners generally, and those whose morals or political ideas fell under their disapprobation. Bands of masked men in many of our States have seized individuals, whipped them, tarred and feathered them, occasionally killed them after various tortures. Mobs without masks, and with little or no fear of interference by police or military, have lynched many hapless individuals, mostly negroes. In all, bands of private individuals have put to death, usually by hanging or burning, between three and four thousand men and women in this country since 1890.

The motives in these cases are mixed. There is usually indignation against some crime—in something over a quarter of the cases of recorded lynching, the accusation was that of rape. Sometimes the "best people" are active in the mob, i.e., prominent and respected citizens. But whatever the hatred of the reported crime, or the hatred of the negro *per se,* or the hatred of radical ideas or violations of the generally accepted moral code, the real underlying motive is largely sadistic, sheer animal enjoyment in the excitement of hurting some one and seeing him suffer. Certainly the guilt of the victim is seldom investigated, and many innocent people have been among those tortured and put to death. When news of such an impending event spreads, people sometimes flock from considerable distances to enjoy the sensation.

The New Orleans States of June 26, 1919, had a headline in large type across the page:

> *3,000 WILL BURN NEGRO*
> *Negro Jerky and Sullen as Burning Hour Nears*—To be taken to scene of crime and stood before crowd. . . .
> Officers are unable to control the crowds. . . .

The Jackson (Miss.) Daily News had the headlines:

> *JOHN HARTFIELD WILL BE LYNCHED BY ELLISVILLE MOB*
> *at 5 o'Clock this afternoon.*
> Governor Bilbo says he is powerless to prevent it. Thousands of people are flocking into Ellisville to attend the event. A committee of Ellisville citizens has been appointed to make the necessary arrangements for the event, and the mob is pledged to act in conformity with these arrangements.

We need not discuss these horrors. They are the darkest blot upon American honour, and our national disgrace. In a civilized land there is no place for cruelties by mobs, by secret or open organizations, by labourers or employers, by any political or economic group. Of the lesser forms of violence we may say that they are a bad start in the wrong direction, they set a dangerous precedent to other groups. All forms of violence mean suffering, estrangements, and encouragement to the worst side of human nature. No, if individuals are thought to be guilty of crimes, they must be given fair trial and punished only by the community as a whole, working through its legally appointed officials. If any group feels itself oppressed, it must appeal to the force of public opinion, and seek a remedy through peaceful bargaining, through the passing of new laws, or the devising of new social mechanisms. In a frontier society much may be excused, even condoned. Or in a time of great upheaval, and the establishment of a new social order, as in Russia in recent years. But we have no such excuses in America today.

Is There a Crime Wave?

A war always brings in its wake a wave of moral laxity, self-indulgence, intolerance, lawlessness, and crime. But the war of 1914-1918 did not, after all, touch us very vitally; and the unexampled prosperity of our people has averted the restlessness that swept over Europe. Improving education, together with all sorts of movements, such as the establishment of Juvenile Courts, has worked for the lessening of law-breaking. The available statistics are capable of various interpretations. But they give pretty good evidence of a general *diminution* in criminality per population in the past decade or two. The rapid spread of "dry" laws in the

various states, capped by the Federal Amendment, has, of course, given us a whole new set of law-breakers, since what was not illegal a few years ago has now become so. The same thing is true of the recent laws against the use of narcotic drugs. The enormous increase in the number of automobiles has likewise produced a great many violations of the new speed and traffic laws. But on the other hand, the prohibition laws have, in the country as a whole, lessened public intoxication, disorderly conduct, and vagrancy, in marked degree. And the cheapness of the automobile has given many youths an innocent vent for energies which otherwise, pent up in the cities, might have led to lawlessness or vice.

Commitments for certain crimes have increased for specific reasons. The apparent increase in rape is due to the raising of the "age of consent" in many of our States. The apparent increase in forgery is probably due to increased vigilance on the part of banks and business houses.

There are two crimes, however, whose increase is sinister, robbery and homicide. Here again we must discount the statistics; many of the homicides are accidents incident to the use of the automobile. But the fact remains that the modern high-powered car makes possible a fast getaway. And certain groups of hardened criminals have learned that, with modern automatic revolvers or machine-guns (and perhaps bullet-proof vests), together with their fast automobiles, they stand a good chance of making a success of robbery. The increase of homicide is, to some extent, a concomitant of these robberies, the penalty for robbery being so severe that a criminal daring enough to attempt it is likely to take the further risk of shooting rather than to let himself be caught

> What this analysis of the evidence brings us to is that robbery, with murder as a frequent incident, is the phenomenon that has brought all this clamour to our dulled senses. *Robbery is the crime wave.* Not because of its frequency. Notwithstanding its increase in the country at large and the shrinking of the burglary rate, the number of robberies is still little more than one-third the number of burglaries. Fifteen years ago it was only one-fifth. It is the sensational character of the crime that has given it its glamorous and terroristic effect.[3]

In robbery, burglary, and homicide our cities show a rate much worse than those of the cities of Europe. The reasons for this are, in part at least, rather obvious. Over here the use of the fast automobile is vastly commoner, and owing to the great numbers of them everywhere an escaping auto is extremely difficult to trace. As in so many ways, good and bad, America is simply ahead of Europe, ahead, that is, chronologically. What the glories and dangers of the civilization of the future are going to be is, in most ways, first discernible here. And the crimes of which we are speaking are one of the dangers of the state of material civilization at which we have arrived. There is much more wealth to be got by robbery in this country, and naturally criminals from all over Europe and the Americas flock to our cities as their best hunting-ground.

There are certain other causes which should be noted. The racial tension between whites and blacks is a large factor in the homicide rate, as the statistics show.[4] The slow-

[3] From an article in the *Survey Graphic.*

[4] The number of homicides per 100,000 population in 1921 was: In New York, 6.2; in Chicago, 11.8; in Boston, 3.7; in St. Louis, 17.2; in New Orleans, 20.0; in Nashville, 35.1; in Memphis, 56.8. (Memphis has been in recent years the most murderous city in the country.)

ness and uncertainty of our criminal court procedure—which Justice Taft has recently called "a disgrace to our civilization"—doubtless plays its part. So does what Raymond Fosdick calls "the inadequacy and demoralization of our police machinery." Our police are in many cities the butt of the spoils-system; they are, in general, less professional in training and in attitude than in Europe. It is difficult to know in what measure these various factors contribute to our sensational wave of robbery and homicide. But there are visible causes other than any exceptional criminality of our people. And it is reassuring to learn from the statistics that, on the whole, our people are neither more lawless than other peoples nor becoming more lawless as time goes on.

How Can We Diminish Lawlessness?

Whether we are more lawless than other nations, or more lawless than we were some years ago, is, after all, a minor matter. There is in any case, in every land, a continual struggle between the forces of law and order and the various forces that make for criminality. The most important question is, What can we do, that we are not doing, to diminish the amount of crime?

There is certainly much room for improvement in our criminal law and court procedure. There is much room for improvement in our police-systems. There is room for improvement in our schools, where the reasons that justify our laws, and the importance of the law-abiding spirit, should be made clear, and patriotism should be developed as a loyalty to our country's laws. There is room for improvement in our churches, where the spiritual solidarity of the community should be preached, where racial and class prejudices and selfish individualism should be vigorously

fought, where men and women should be shown the joy of co-operation and kindness.

But the churches and the schools must beware of teaching that existing political and economic arrangements are sacrosanct. Criticism of the laws, the courts, and of our whole industrial and social order must be welcomed, not held disloyal. Above all, the poorer people must not be led to feel that things are weighted against them, that they cannot hope to get their fair share of the good things of life. Not only must all people who think they have grievances be allowed to air them freely, but preachers and professors, publicists, journalists, and legislators must show that they are concerned over these grievances and are doing what they can to bring about a "square deal" everywhere, a juster and humaner social order than we have yet achieved. This is desirable, of course, anyway; incidentally, it will make for contentment and a law-abiding spirit.

The majority of our criminals have been made what they are by the conditions of their life. They have lacked the proper educational influences of which we have spoken. They have had unwholesome influences in their homes, or in their neighbourhood. They have very probably lived in quarters not fit for human habitation. For want of playgrounds, they have lacked healthy outdoor exercise and wholesome sports. They have had little or no vocational education, and have no skill to earn a good living. They have had few normal interests aroused in them, and so easily become interested in vice or crime. They have, very likely, fallen under the influence of alcohol, or one of the other narcotics, and thereby dulled the inhibitions which might otherwise have kept them straight. The conditions under which they have to do whatever honest work they can

get are dreary and discouraging, very likely over-fatiguing and unhealthy. In short, when one studies the influences affecting the "submerged tenth," realizes what society has failed to do for them, and how lacking in normal happiness their lives are apt to be, the wonder grows that so few of them get desperate and turn to crime.

If we were far-sighted, we should see that the most important thing about any community is the way the children are growing up. In many of our cities living conditions are unspeakably bad; the poor cannot afford better quarters, the landlords care for nothing but to make as much money as they can. In a country as rich and prosperous as ours these conditions are inexcusable. Our society as a whole must share the blame of the crime rate. As a recent writer puts it, "The criminal mind is not the result of a deliberate resolve to be a 'bad man' and take the chances, but the slow, unconscious fruition of a long process of alienation from the moral aims of society. The criminal is 'a demnition product' of our neglect and mishandling of him."

We must add to this indictment the fact that our prison-system usually transforms the first offender into a hardened criminal. We need a careful diagnosis and classification of law-breakers, and differential treatment according to individual need. It should be obvious to any one that all places of detention must be clean and wholesome, and that all prisoners must be taught a vocation, if they have none, and must be kept at work. Physical health and honest labour are the primary requisites for self-respect and a normal social attitude. Space does not permit an elaboration of the principles of a scientific penology, or a substantiation of the assertion that our present prison system is (with honourable exceptions) a long, long way removed, not merely from what would be ideal, but from what is tolerable. We not

only do not cure our criminals, we generally make them worse.

> We have given him every opportunity to acquire an anti-social attitude. We have stained his mind and we have injured his body. We have removed him from the working world at a time when, if he is ever to acquire them, he ought to be laying down habits of industry. We have broken his spirit, impressed him with his social isolation, taken from him all possibility of contact with good people, forced him to find friends among the bad, and, finally, we have given him, like as not, a determination for revenge. And then we have let him loose, we have graduated him.[5]

The policy of sentencing a criminal to so many months or years in prison springs from the irrational but instinctive feeling that the treatment of criminals should be punishment, revenge for the wrong they have done. A rational morality would not countenance that spirit. It would be sorry enough for the criminal ("There but for the grace of God go I!"), and would not seek to inflict unhappiness upon him, any more than upon any one else. It would seek to cure him. Crime has its causes, like everything else; and a scientific criminology is gradually learning how to combat them. Presently the prisoner will be sent to a workhouse, a model farm, a vocational training school, or whatever other institution seems indicated in his particular case, will be educated, given opportunity for exercising initiative, taking responsibility, and learning self-respect, as well as getting physically well and strong. He will be watched by mental hygienists and kept under detention until he shows evidence of being cured. Not until then will he be discharged. And after his discharge he will be on probation, he will be

[5] From an article in the *Survey Graphic*.

watched and helped to avoid temptation, to establish himself in honourable employment, and to resume his place among normal citizens. . . . This may sound utopian, but it is only common sense.

A certain number of criminals will be incurable, either because they were hopelessly abnormal at birth, or because they have become too warped or hardened to be cured. They must be segregated for life. Most such people could be discovered as children, if our schools were required to have proper mental diagnosis and cataloguing of their pupils, and prevented from becoming crimnials. Those who are congenitally pathological in marked degree should either be segregated in early life, or sterilized, so they can have no children to perpetuate the defective stock. . . . In short, crime must be treated not as a mere perverse exercise of free will, but as a disease.

Certain forms of lawlessness will need special treatment. Mob violence and lynching can best be met, perhaps (apart from the fundamental influences of education and religion), by a Federal law. For local authorities, even State authorities, in certain sections of our country, at present, are, as experience shows, apt to sympathize with the mobs and withhold punishment. A good law would be to require the county which permits mob violence to pay a heavy money penalty. . . . The program for lessening robbery, and the homicides which sometimes attend it, is too complicated to discuss here. . . . The violation of the prohibition laws we shall discuss in our next chapter. . . . Enough has been said to remind the reader how many-sided is the problem of lawlessness. Admitting exceptions to the duty of law-abidingness, as to every concrete moral ideal, that duty remains the foundation of a rational moral code.

CHAPTER VIII

INTOXICATION AND BOOTLEGGING

ANY prohibitory law must be judged on its merits. On the one hand, the deprivation of liberty is an evil; on the other hand, there are the evils which the law seeks to prevent. The only generalization we can make is that we must, in each specific case, prefer the lesser to the greater evil. What then shall our judgment be in the field where we speak of Prohibition *par excellence?*

It is not enough to point out that Prohibition is an infringement of personal liberty. Of course it is. So is all legislation. The question merely is, whether this particular limitation of liberty is justifiable in the general interest. Practically all of us, except for the addicts, believe in the prohibition of the use of opium and cocaine, except for medicinal purposes. The difference between the two problems lies partly in the fact that there are probably well under a million opium or cocaine addicts in the country (and most of these ashamed to acknowledge the fact), while there are perhaps thirty million people more or less addicted to the use of alcoholic beverages. If as many Americans used the one as the other, we should have an even more vigorous protest against prohibiting opium and cocaine than we now have against prohibiting alcohol. So far as *rights* go, we have no more moral right to forbid the solace of the opium

or cocaine derivatives to one million people than we have to forbid the pleasures of alcoholic drinks to thirty million. It is, in both cases, a matter for scientific physiological and sociological investigation: Is the harm done plainly greater than the good to be got from these various narcotics? It is not a question of how many people *want* the opium or the alcohol, it is a question as to the effects produced when they have it, a question of *fact,* albeit a very complicated one, not to be answered offhand. We must look fairly at both sides of the question, asking, first, what evils result from the use of alcoholic liquors, and, then, what good comes from it.

The Case for Prohibition

Physiologically, there is no doubt that, in general, alcoholic drinks are bad for us. They decrease both physical and mental efficiency, diminish resistance to cold or heat, to exposure, to disease. Careful scientific experiments have shown marked results of this sort from very moderate drinking. And though the question of comparative longevity is still being discussed, the preponderance of evidence is that, other things equal, the total abstainer has the best chance for a long life.

But so far as all that goes, most people do many things that are not good for them; and it is not practicable to require them to abstain. Moreover, it is a highly individual matter; for some people a slight narcosis may be actually desirable after the day's work, when they feel the need of being "let down." At any rate, whether or not there is such a thing as the prudent use of alcoholic drinks, physiologically speaking, the human organism is, in many cases, very tough; and a good many moderate drinkers live to a ripe old age.

Far more serious than the effects upon the organism of the drinker is the question of the physiological effects upon his children and grandchildren. Investigations carried on by responsible scientists have shown that the death rate of the children of abstainers studied averaged lower than that of children of moderate drinkers, that they had fewer defects, and that they averaged well ahead of the children of moderate drinkers in their classes. These results are still under fire. So many other factors enter in, that we may not consider these conclusions as definitely proved. The results of experimentation upon animals seem to confirm them, though those results, too, are in question and of doubtful application to human beings. But if there is sound reason for believing that habitual drinking, even in moderation, may handicap one's children physically, that surely makes it an absolute duty to abstain. However one may tamper with one's own health, it is wicked to tamper with that of one's children. Moreover, the health of coming generations is a prime concern of us all; and since it would not be feasible to exempt from a prohibitory law those who are not going to have children (or any *more* children), the State has here—if these data are sound—ample justification for prohibiting this racial poison.

It is of utmost importance that this matter be thoroughly studied, that we may know exactly how, and to what extent, drinking affects one's children. It is conceivable that a large proportion of the physical and mental defects of our existing population are due to the alcoholism of earlier generations. Certainly in countries like France, where the consumption of alcohol is very great,[1] the infant death rate is extremely high,

[1] The pre-war figures for yearly per-capita consumption of alcohol were approximately as follows: France, 22 liters; Italy, 19; Gt. Britain, 9; Germany, 7; United States, 6.

the number of defectives, and the proportion of young men unfit for military service, very great. If a definite correlation can be shown between alcoholic poisoning and the loss of stamina, or of mental capacity, or of normal physical condition, of subsequent generations, the question of Prohibition will be definitely closed.

If the question just discussed is to be considered still open, the case for Prohibition rests upon the social dangers of drinking. When alcohol is taken beyond a certain point, which varies with the individual, it tends to produce a relaxing of moral standards, a drugging of ambition, prudence, and the various restraints which education and necessity have imposed upon animal instinct. The man under the influence of alcohol is more of a primitive animal; a very large proportion of undesirable sex-license, and of crime, is due, in part, to the relaxing of these inhibitions through drinking. All social workers know that it is usually the drinking men who are improvident or cruel, who neglect their wives and children, or worse than neglect them. Many people, of course, drink their wine or beer regularly without having their moral standards impaired. And there would still be plenty of vice and crime if alcohol were entirely banished. None the less, every social worker knows that, by and large, alcohol is the greatest obstacle he has to contend with. And if "social work" were done among the rich, exactly the same situation would be found.

The following statement could be paralleled over and over again:

> At a meeting of the Police Inspectors in New York, when the subject under discussion was the cause of crime, one experienced inspector gave it as his judg-

> ment, which seemed to be generally concurred in, that drink was the biggest single cause of crime.[2]

Another danger resulting from drinking has become increasingly serious with the increasing mechanization of our civilization, the danger of increasing accidents through the slowing down of reactions by alcohol.

> Two years ago I attended the annual congress of the National Safety Council. . . . There was scarcely a session held in the three days the Council sat that the relation of liquor to safety did not come up. Again and again there was vigorous warning from experienced experts that safety was out of the question so long as men used liquor. It was not because they had as a rule, I judged, any objection to liquor *per se*—many of them frankly said they liked their beer or wine—but when it came to liquor drinking by workingmen they attacked it as violently as they did uncovered wheels and gears and belts.[3]

Almost every one, in America, drives an automobile now. To drive without accident requires a steady head and hand; many thousands of people are killed and maimed annually in automobile accidents. Every one knows cases where innocent people have been killed through the carelessness of drunken drivers. But it is a scientific fact that even a single glass of wine slows up reactions; the man who has been drinking only a little is not so fit for an emergency as one who has abstained. The railways have long since demanded total abstinence of trainmen. The same reasons hold for

[2] Arthur Woods, *Crime Prevention*, p. 73.
[3] Ida M. Tarbell, *New Ideals in Business*, p. 111.

automobile drivers. In a simple age, where only simple activities are carried on, it matters little how quick and sure one's reactions are. In a highly mechanized age it matters a great deal. We are all at the mercy of countless people driving cars; we have the right to demand from them total abstinence.

The case *against* alcohol, even apart from the disputed fact of congenital injury, is strong. Let us see what is to be said *for* it.

The Case Against Prohibition

Drinking gives great pleasure to many people, and deprivation brings considerable discontent. So far as the craving for drink goes, Prohibition rigorously enforced for a generation would put an end to all but a sentimental and wistful longing to taste the delights of an older day. The enjoyment of intoxicants is an artificial pleasure; and if men had not acquired the taste for them they would not miss them. But the loss of the pleasures of drinking, whether felt or not, would be a real loss. The average man has too few sources of enjoyment for us wantonly to cut off a single one. And even if the enjoyment has to be paid for, we must not insist that people sacrifice joys at our bidding because of prudential considerations. That is, after all, their own business. Even where there is risk of harm to other people, we must not necessarily decide against the joys. It all depends upon how great the joys are and how great the risk of harm.

There are several considerations, however, which should affect our decision. One of them is the fact that the pleasure which goes with drinking has to be paid for. If there is an exhilaration of spirits for a time, there is an ensuing depression. The depression may be less acute, spread thin, as it

were, over a longer period, and not recognized as due to the drinking. Even if recognized, many drinkers may, even in their cooler moments, prefer to pay the price, for the brief period of hedonic uplift. But most people who have noted carefully the results of drinking admit that the pleasure isn't really worth the price; they simply can not resist the pleasure, though they know they must pay for it. At any rate, the pleasures of drinking are in a very different class from the pleasures of sport, or music, or the theatre, and all the other normal joys of life which result in no poisoning of the organism and do not exact a toll.

Again, the pleasure of drinking is partly a matter of tradition and "suggestion." The drinking of wine has been immortalized by poets and has become associated with happy and festive occasions, which have given it an adventitious glamour. Already in America, in many circles, non-alcoholic drinks have replaced traditional beverages at festive occasions, and other ways of being happy together have been found. Charming as are Horace's Odes, man can be jovial in other ways than his; and man has many centuries ahead of him in which he can create poetry without talking about wine and irresponsible amours. If social pleasures seem to languish where wine is absent, it is among those who are used to it; the wine acts as "suggestion," as well as physiologically, its absence having for them a suggestive effect making for glumness and boredom. But that is like the sulking of a child whose pet toy has been taken away. Men are not in the long run going to refrain from jollity together if they can not narcotize themselves with alcohol; and wine or no wine, they will continue to invest their festive occasions with poetry and song.

If life were for most people as rich and interesting as we

may hope that it will some day become, there would be little need of this artificial and dangerous solace. But the average man today is more or less careworn, worried, bored, or depressed. He drinks because alcohol fogs his mind, banishes his troubles, gives him a temporary and specious content. Even if his depression returns the next morning, he knows he can escape it again and again. Some people live in this way for long periods in a chronic state of partial anæsthesia, thereby spared the sharp realization of bitter fact.

In the long run, however, such a specious escape from maladjustments and stupidities of one's self and others is very bad for mankind. Among the major reasons why social progress has been so slow is this fact that men have drowned their miseries in drink instead of putting their wits to work and finding out how to cure them. Some of the worst of man's ills are due to poverty; and the saving of the billions of dollars a year that man spends on alcoholic liquors would permit the curing of many of these. Many other ills are curable if they are attacked with energy and unclouded intellect. But men who have fallen into the cheap and easy way of drowning out their troubles seldom set to work with a clear head to cure them. What we need is to contrive such a social and industrial system, and to fit individuals into it so successfully, that they will not need to find a means of escape. And for the unescapable sorrows of life, wholesome interests and recreations, based upon physical and mental health, would undoubtedly be more effective in the end than the pathological and transient anæsthesia of alcohol.

This will sound to many readers like a harsh asceticism. For them a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush. *They* can not remedy the injustices and cruelties of life; their own blunders and follies and sins can not now be wiped out.

Why not, at least for the moment, forget, and see the drabness of life through the rosy hue of a glass of wine? In many cases a kind-hearted person would be glad to accede to such a plea. If it were feasible to grant the boon of narcosis to those who most acutely need it, and to refuse it to the greater number who ought to be keeping their minds clear and their bodies sound! Or if it were possible to ensure that none, or few, would drink beyond the point where serious harm may result! But of course neither of these things is possible. We must make up our minds either to renounce for every one the solace of drinking, or to face the physiological and social evils of which we have spoken.

It is argued that instead of Prohibition we should preach moderation. But moderation has always been preached, immoderation has always been practised by many. We must realize clearly that if intoxicants are available many people are going to drink them till they get the "kick"; that is what such people drink them *for.* That will be a little or a lot, according to the individual's susceptibility. But it will be enough to do him the physiological harm and to expose others to the social dangers of which we have spoken. All the preaching and teaching in the world will avail little with such people against so primitive an appeal. Most of these drinkers will not be "drunk." They will think of themselves as "perfectly all right." But they are not people who ought to be having children, or running cars on our crowded streets.

It is believed by many that alcohol is a valuable stimulant to artistic and intellectual achievement. But this is certainly an illusion, based upon two misleading observations. In the first place, a writer or artist *feels* himself to be stimu-

lated when he has had his glass—just as the man who is cold feels himself warmed by a drink. We know now, however, from scientific investigation, that alcohol is always a depressant, never a stimulant. The bodily temperature is actually lowered, not raised, by drinking. Arctic explorers now universally abstain. The mechanism of the brain works more slowly when alcoholized, the supposed stimulation is a subjective illusion. The "flow of spirits" which follows drinking comes from the release of inhibitions, the dulling of the critical faculty, rather than from any positive increase in mental brilliancy. Men who have been drinking *feel* themselves and one another to be witty and clever. But the sober onlooker can see that they are simply silly. The poet who finds his inspiration after drinking is simply content with a cheaper inspiration. And, moreover, he has got into a bad habit. If he can not bring himself to work except when he has partially fogged his brain, he will never do the best work of which he is capable.

In the second place, the lover of wine points to the fact that nearly all the great artists and poets have been wine-drinkers. *Post hoc propter hoc.* The flaw in the argument is that, within historic times, most people who have *not* been great artists and poets have been wine-drinkers. We have yet to see what heights of literary and artistic achievement a sober world can reach. Artists are more prone to drink than most other people, because they are, temperamentally and through the wear and tear of their work, high-strung and nervous. But if they had kept their heads free from the semi-narcosis of alcohol, there is no knowing what they might have done. Certainly a great number of artists and poets have shortened their lives by drink; some of the greatest creative artists the world has known died young, as the

indirect result of drinking. This is a very tangible loss for art, to be debited to alcohol.

Some anti-prohibitionists declare that if alcohol is prohibited, men will turn to more dangerous narcotics. A book recently published in America states that "the number of drug addicts has enormously increased." This, however, is on a par with the other wild statements which are to be heard on every hand on this subject where prejudice runs high. The Foreign Policy Association of New York has very recently written to the leading authorities in the country, Federal and local officials, physicians, prison wardens, hospital directors, and the like. Without exception these report that the national Prohibition law has had no apparent effect upon the use of drugs. Before the Federal law went into operation the States where drinking was heaviest were the States where the use of other drugs was heaviest. We are probably in for much trouble from opium and cocaine; but any social worker knows that it is easier to keep sober people away from them than drinking people.

Some people fear, or pretend to fear, that if the Prohibition law is not repealed, it will prove an opening wedge for future laws against tobacco, coffee, and other more or less deleterious delights. But every one knows that the narcotic effect of smoking is negligible as compared with that of drinking; and that coffee, though rather bad for certain people, is a stimulant instead of a narcotic; that is, it makes the brain clearer instead of duller, and is therefore socially helpful rather than dangerous. Those who express fears of what prohibitionists may do next must look upon them as fanatical Puritans, bent on banishing pleasures. But however many fanatics there may be in favour of Prohibition, the bulk of its support has come not from Puritanism—

which, historically speaking, was not usually hostile to drinking—but from science, which has revealed the physiological harm of alcohol, from business, which has become less and less content to tolerate befogged brains, and from social workers of various sorts, who from different angles have seen what a stumbling-block alcoholism has been in the way of every form of social amelioration.

Prohibition was not "put over" by political wire-pulling, it was the result of overwhelming public sentiment. Three-fifths of our population were already living in "dry" territory before the Amendment was passed; thirty-three of the forty-eight States had state-wide Prohibition. Moreover, no other amendment to the Federal Constitution was adopted by so many States (only two failed to ratify it) or by such large majorities in the legislatures. If the moral status of this amendment is questionable, one hates to think of the moral status of some of the other amendments! There is at present a natural wavering of public opinion, owing to disgust at the very incomplete enforcement of the law, to a vigorous campaign of anti-prohibition propaganda, and to the general increase in the spirit of license following the War. But in spite of the very considerable amount of talking being done by opponents of the law, the elections continue to show strong preponderance of "dry" sentiment; and there is no doubt that if a popular referendum were held it would sustain the law.

The present writer is far from believing in Puritanism; he is all for human happiness, wherever it can safely be found. He personally enjoys alcoholic liquors and finds it a real cross to do without them. But the harm done by alcohol seems to him clearly greater than the good. He believes that, taking everything into consideration, the

human race as a whole will be considerably happier if it can rid itself of the habit of alcoholism. He recognizes that restrained and occasional drinking would be, for many people, almost harmless, and worth the cost. But he sees that it is a social problem, that there is no feasible way of avoiding the very grave evils of alcoholism except by a general willingness to sacrifice its pleasures. And he, in common with millions of others, has consented willingly, though wistfully, to that sacrifice.

What Is Our Present Duty?

Many observers of the American scene declare that, grave as are the evils of alcoholism, the Prohibition Amendment was a tactical error and is doing more harm than good. We must, then, briefly consider our present situation.

A great deal of money is evidently being spent to nullify the law and turn people's minds against it. The press teems with stories of drinking-orgies and accidents caused by drunkenness. Such incidents were too common to be news before the Volstead Act was passed; now they are news—and perhaps propaganda. At any rate, we must, as usual, discount the newspapers, and street-corner gossip, and look to the records of the police, the courts, hospitals, correctional institutions, social welfare agencies, and the like.

It is extremely difficult to make any safe generalizations about the momentary situation, or to decide whether it is improving or growing worse. There is apparently an increase in drinking in what is called "the smart set." Whether this is due in any considerable degree to resentment at the law, or to the excitement of law-breaking, is doubtful. Smoking has been more than doubled since the war; dancing and "petting" and every form of pleasure-seeking, innocent

or malign, has greatly increased. It is altogether probable that, if it had not been for the Prohibition law, we should have seen our national consumption of alcohol doubled or trebled in these days of unexampled prosperity, of excitement-chasing and license. As it is, it is very doubtful if there is, on the whole, as much drinking, even among the wealthier people, taken as a whole, as before the Volstead Act. The belief in the increase in drinking is like the belief in the unluckiness of Friday, or in the thirteen-at-table danger, and a hundred other superstitions. The cases that sustain the generalization are conspicuous and make an impression, the greater number of cases that make against it are not noted. Certainly there are any number of clubs, and college reunions, and festive occasions of all sorts, where wines would, as a matter of course, have been served in the older days, where they are no longer seen. Millions of Americans live and travel about their country without sight of a glass of any sort of alcoholic liquor from one year's end to another—which, of course, would not be possible in any European country, unless it be Finland, which has nation-wide prohibition.

A fair sample of popular distortion of the facts may be found in the current impression that drinking has increased among college students. What the students themselves say is of little importance, for they were not on hand to note the drinking of their predecessors. What do the older people resident at the colleges say? Several questionnaires have recently been sent out to presidents and deans of colleges, and to the officers of the leading boarding-schools for boys. An overwhelming majority say there is less drinking now by students than ever before.

The schools reporting are practically unanimous in their testimony that drinking among undergraduates is steadily on the wane, while a number emphasize the fact that the past year has proved the best on record.[4]

I am not a prohibitionist, and have never been. I will admit to you, however, that the effect of prohibition at Yale University has been good. I know whereof I speak, for I have been a member of the Committee on Discipline from a time dating back many years before prohibition. I know conditions intimately, I do not pretend that the students are prohibitionists or are not drinking, but the change has been simply revolutionary. In the old days our Committee was constantly busy with cases involving intoxication and the disorders originating from it. Now we have practically no business of the kind at all to transact. Moreover, this is in spite of the fact that in the old days we rarely troubled ourselves about a case of mere intoxication if it had not resulted in some kind of public disorder, whereas now intoxication of itself is regarded as calling for the severest penalty.[5]

Speaking from the authentic records of the Police Department, there is much less drinking now than before the Eighteenth Amendment went into effect. Yale undergraduates are much better behaved than then, and one of the direct benefits of prohibition is that their conduct has improved so materially.[6]

[4] Dr. A. E. Stearns, principal of Phillips Academy, Andover, Mass., in *Harper's Magazine* for November, 1926.

[5] Statement of Professor Charles C. Clark of Yale on the witness-stand at a Senate Committee hearing in Washington.

[6] Statement of the Chief of Police of New Haven, Conn., at the same hearing.

When we consider the effects of the Law upon the people of the United States as a whole, a decrease in drinking is undeniable. Employers of labour almost unanimously find drunkenness decreased, and their employees steadier and more efficient. In spite of the highly poisonous nature of much of the bootleggers' liquor, arrests for drunkenness, the country over, are fewer, and deaths from alcoholism are fewer. The necessary expenditures of charitable organizations for drunkards' families are much less, and millions of families have more comforts and increased savings-bank accounts. Most foreign observers and commissions have reported a decline in drinking in America. All sorts of estimates of this decline have been made. Typical is the result of an elaborate investigation made by W. S. Shepherd, the results of which were published recently in *Collier's Weekly*. Mr. Shepherd concluded, from an examination of many sources, that America is now consuming about one fourth as much alcohol as in pre-prohibition days. If the truth is anything like that, we must not put disproportionate emphasis upon the drinking, however great, in certain circles and in some of our larger cities.

Further, whatever the present situation may be, we must remember that we are merely at the beginning of the Prohibition era. It would in any case take a generation to root out present drinking habits. We have to reckon with millions of recent immigrants from Europe who have not been educated to understand the reasons for Prohibition and see no sense in it whatever. Our richer people have stocks on hand from pre-prohibition days, and will probably never have difficulty in replenishing their stocks in one way or other. The problem of protecting our enormously long frontiers from smuggling is very difficult. And of course

there are thousands of people in positions of authority who are willing to accept a bribe. In time, if we educate our children, and the children of immigrants, to understand the reasons for the Prohibition Amendment, a much more efficient enforcement will become possible. Some of our States have had excellent results from their State Prohibition laws, showing a striking decrease not only in drunkenness, but in the number of insane and feeble-minded, inmates of jails and poor-houses, and in the mortality rate, and a remarkable increase in prosperity. What these States accomplished can be accomplished the country over, if public opinion can be more and more educated to support the Law.

In any case, it is no argument for the repeal of a law that it is being poorly enforced. Many laws are poorly enforced. The Southerners did not believe in the abolition of slavery, and did what they could to nullify the laws that gave the negroes equal rights with white men. The rights of the negroes are still, after more than sixty years, far from completely won. But every one knows that the negroes are far better off than if the Federal Amendments giving them equal rights had not been passed. For that matter, the automobile speed laws, the laws against robbery and theft, and many other laws, are being poorly enforced; but no one urges their repeal. If a desirable law is being poorly enforced, the obvious need is to enforce it, not to repeal it. The whole question is, whether it is or is not a desirable law.

Those who oppose it should be required to state explicitly what alternative they propose. Is it a law permitting light wines and beers? Such laws in Canada have not decreased the reported consumption of alcohol. Nor have they stopped the bootlegging of hard liquors. On the contrary, where light wines are sold in quantity, it is far more difficult to

detect the sale of liquors of higher alcoholic content than when all alcoholic drinks are prohibited. Those who want a bigger "kick" than they can get from light wines are no more content to be without what they want than they are in dry territory. It is easier, in very many cases, to keep people from getting any taste for liquor than to let them get a taste for weak liquor and keep them from wanting something stronger.

Space limitations forbid the discussion here of possible alternatives to Prohibition. Certainly any way that any thoughtful person conceives to be a more effective way of putting an end to the evils of alcoholism should be carefully studied. It is altogether probable that these evils can never be wholly ended. It is a question of relative success. Obviously the most effective method would be international prohibition of all alcoholic beverages, together with the education of the peoples of all lands to see the need of such laws and to support them. Education alone will not cure the evils, nor will legislation alone. Educated opinion must find expression in legislation and back it up.

As for America, the Prohibition Amendment is here, and is not going to be repealed for the present. Perhaps it was too extreme, perhaps it was premature. But no one has a moral right to break any law, we decided in the preceding chapter, except after the most conscientious study of the reasons that lie behind it, and then only if he is willing to break it openly and take the consequences. Bootlegging is underhanded law-breaking. To connive at it by buying liquor secretly, or by drinking others' bootlegged liquor, is to do one's part toward breaking down respect for law in general. Let those who believe this law to be bad state their reasons temperately, and urge its repeal. Let them

work for whatever alternative they favour. But while the law exists, let them obey it, however irksome obedience may be.

More than this. A great experiment is being made here, the first great nationwide effort to rid man of what has proved, in spite of its pleasantness and the poetry that has invested it, one of the most terrible curses he has ever brought upon his head. This experiment has only begun, but it has got itself entrenched in a law that is very difficult to repeal. The ultimate success of the experiment will long be in doubt. The rest of the world is watching America. If our crusade against alcoholism holds its own against its attackers, and in some reasonable degree succeeds, similar efforts will be greatly encouraged elsewhere. Those who agree with the argument outlined in this chapter will not merely refrain from joining those who are trying to make the crusade fail, they will give of their best, at whatever personal sacrifice, to help make it succeed.

CHAPTER IX

MARITAL FAILURES

Is Divorce An Evil or a Cure?

THE evils of alcoholism can be banished, if a sufficiently large majority believe them to be serious enough to warrant the effort and sacrifice. The unhappiness, the cruelties, the demoralization that so often result from living together in the intimacy of marriage can never be wholly banished, unless human nature can be far better trained than has ever yet on any wide scale been done. It may not be quite true that, as Mr. Chesterton insists, a man and a woman are in the nature of the case incompatible. But it is doubtless true that few couples can live together for years without some measure of disagreement, exasperation, or strain. A really successful marriage is one of the very best things life can offer, both in the immediate happiness it gives and in the opportunities for spiritual development it provides. But on the other hand an unhappy marriage is a fruitful source of misery; and this constitutes certainly one of the elementary problems which a rational ethics must attack.

Undoubtedly the majority of marital tangles can be solved by kindness, sympathy, cheerfulness, and patience. For this relation, with its delicate problems of differing temperaments, interests, and ideals, there is needed a high and sane standard of morality as well as a genuine affection. A

religious temper, if it is at once ardent and generous, is a great help. But we must admit that at present most people are stunted and distorted in their moral development, with individual selfishnesses and self-indulgences, unable to sympathize with manners and morals other than their own, and moreover, much of the time so tried or worried or passion-ridden that they fall far short of their own ideals. If they have any working religion at all, it is likely to be Puritanical and intolerant. They have had little education that would fit them for the fine adjustments that the marriage relation requires. And we must realize, also, that human nature is of many varieties, that many couples could never be made to fit together harmoniously, that all the good will and patience in the world would never make some marriages really happy.

The long-established attitude of the respectable people in our country has been that, no matter how unsuited a pair are to each other, when they have made their bed they must lie in it. The teaching of the Church has been that, except when one of a very few specific wrongs has been committed, divorce is a sin. People generally have considered it, if not a sin, a disgrace. It has been attended with considerable expense and unpleasant publicity, and has usually involved the proving of serious injury committed by one of the pair. Add to this the fact that the economic dependence of women has made them cling even to an unhappy marriage as their only means of support, as well as their only favorable opportunity for a pleasant social position. They have often been tied down by large families. For these and other reasons, married people have in relatively few cases been able to consider squarely what would make for their best happiness, or the development of their personalities to greatest useful-

ness; they have muddled along, and, if unhappy, have simply stuck it out.

But, as every one knows, the situation has lately been changing in all of these respects. More and more women are learning to earn their own livings and are developing a sense of individuality. Supernaturally sanctioned prohibitions are losing their prestige. There are few large families nowadays, and many childless couples. We are ceasing to think of divorce as a sin or a disgrace. We are recognizing that, except in the matter of ensuring proper care for the children, if any, it is nobody else's business whether two people choose to live together or to separate. Or rather, it is so much more their happiness that is at stake in the matter than any one else's, that they should be left free to settle it to their own satisfaction. We may emphasize the fact, which almost every one admits, that a happy life-long marriage is the best thing; but we must get rid of the pernicious superstition that a life-long unhappy marriage is the next best thing. It may be the worst possible thing from every point of view. Of course there are all degrees of unhappiness; and in a given case the best advice may well be to learn how to be happier together rather than to give it up as hopeless. Where unhappiness is due to defects of temperament, manners, or morals, those same defects which make one marriage unhappy are quite likely to make another marriage equally unhappy. Nevertheless, every one knows many cases where a first marriage utterly failed and a second marriage, following divorce, was eminently successful.

What we must clearly recognize is that it is not divorce itself which is the evil, it is unhappy and demoralizing marriage. Divorce is simply the operation that aims to remedy the evil. The operation sometimes is a mistake, sometimes

causes greater evils than it set out to cure, as is the case with surgical operations. But it would be silly to be prejudiced against surgical operations, unpleasant remedies as they are. It is equally silly to be prejudiced against divorce, for all the heartache that may go with it; it is the drastic remedy for mismating. Much of the heartache and bitterness that go with it are needless, a result of the cruel conception of divorce as a disgrace. In any case, it is the unwise marriage that one should be ashamed of, or the failure to make it a success, rather than the divorce. There have always been great numbers of unwise and unsuccessful marriages. What is happening now is that more and more of these blunders are being undone. As a result, there is undoubtedly less marital friction and misery today among our people than ever before.

There are, indeed, cases, played up by the press, where irresponsible people, unaware of the profounder joy of lasting affection and loyalty, have tried a series of short-lived marriage-adventures. And in other cases people have divorced in haste and repented at leisure. But it is these evils of over-hasty divorce and over-frequent divorce that we must attack, rather than the considered divorce which ends an intolerable evil and permits the construction of a better life.

It is noteworthy that the divorce rate has risen most rapidly in the more progressive States, where the general level of intelligence is highest. The rate will rise, if our laws permit, till an equilibrium is reached, and will then remain fairly stable, until we succeed in reducing the number of rash and foolish marriages. Then the divorce rate will again fall. Divorce is necessary, to weed out the failures. But there should be far fewer failures.

What Should the State Do About Divorce?

The State cannot keep its hands off entirely and leave the union and separation of lovers to their own impulses alone. Even where there are no children to be protected, the desertion of a woman who has given some of her best years to a man and is not in a position to make a successful career for herself would often be a serious wrong. And apart from the economic dependence of women—which is diminishing as they get better and better physical and vocational training—loving and living together creates moral obligations which, human nature being what it is, must probably be to some extent enforced by law. Absolutely free love is too apt to be cruel. . . . At least the State should require delay before divorce is granted, to prevent the very natural folly of a hasty decision reached under the influence of temporary passion or exasperation.

With the enforcement of, say, a year's delay (as the law of Norway, for example, requires), divorce by mutual consent, without statement of reasons except the desire of the two parties, seems reasonable. There should be no publicity, heavy expense, or implication of disgrace. There must be registration of intent to seek divorce, and then, after the year (or whatever period seems wisest), a legal decree, providing for maintenance of the children, if any, and for the support of the wife if, because of the particular circumstances of the case, the husband owes her further support.

The difficult problems arise when only one of the parties seeks the divorce. Shall we grant divorce in this case, too, without trial, after a sufficient delay to ensure a considered decision? The Norwegian law in such cases grants it after two years' delay; and this may be considered not an excessive

wait, in view of the tendency of the more polygamous (or polyandrous) type of person to seek the piquancy of a new union. Many an infatuation would pass, many a quarrel be made up, many a mood of anger or resentment be forgotten, if a considerable delay were interposed.

Perhaps, when only one of the pair desires divorce, the decision should be left to a court of domestic relations. In any case there should be such a court, and a compulsory but private discussion of the whole matter with the expert judge, who, experience shows, will often be able to patch the matter up, secure a voluntary withdrawal of the request for divorce, and a lessening of the marital friction that occasioned it. If divorce is then granted (after a very considerable delay) when one party persistently demands it, there may still be cases where serious wrong is done the deserted party. On the other hand, it is highly questionable whether so important a matter can be safely left to the discretion of any judge. Certainly, since all sorts of attitudes and prejudices are current, some judges would grant divorce in cases where others would refuse it, many very dubious decisions would be rendered, and the uncertainty would be very trying.

It is impossible to specify clearly and satisfactorily the situations in which divorce should and should not be granted. To require, as most of our States now require, that some specified injury be proved, results often in the deliberate committing of the injury, or the faking of it, in order that the divorce may be got. And in any case, it is not some specific injury that is usually the ground for desire to separate, it is the underlying fact that the two do not make for each other's happiness or spiritual growth. It is usually impossible to know which of the parties is more at fault,

or whether either party is at fault. And it is not necessary to settle the question of "fault"; the existence of unhappiness and friction, with the consequent strain upon health and character, is itself the reason for divorce, irrespective of its causes. Of course neither of the parties can think merely of his or her own happiness. No person of fine feelings will desert a mate who clings to the marriage and is evidently making some reasonable effort to make it a success. But it takes two to make marriage a tolerable success. And no outsider can possibly know all the ins and outs of the story. In view of the multitudinous sources of strain, such as chronic ill-temper, nagging, and the thousand other faults of human behaviour, the clashes of ideals and prejudices and dogmas and interests that almost every marriage to some degree involves, who but the parties themselves can possibly say when the resulting tension becomes intolerable?

Some conservatives, like Felix Adler, insist that couples should not be granted divorce, since they would then lose the moral discipline of making the necessary adjustments and learning to get on together. And we shall all, doubtless, agree that in many cases where divorce is sought, the best advice would be for them to make a greater effort to get on well together. It often happens that, after weathering a period of friction, or tension, a pair sail out into a calm sea of marital happiness. And the process of weathering the difficulties may be of great spiritual value to both. But most people *want* to stick it out; most people who seek divorce do so because they feel their efforts hopeless and have reached the end of their patience. The registration of intent to apply for divorce is likely to come only after a considerable period of unhappiness; and if that intent persists

for another yeaar, nothing would in most cases be gained by requiring the further perpetuation of the unhappy situation.

At least, the danger of ending a situation fruitful in spiritual discipline is offset by the danger of perpetuating a situation fruitful in demoralization. For true as it is that some unhappy situations develop people morally, it is equally true that other unhappy situations, and probably more, lead to moral degeneration. We all know people whose dispositions have been ruined by unhappy marriage; indeed, there is nothing, probably, which does more moral harm in this world. Multitudes of husbands and wives who might, with the right partner, have developed agreeable and useful personalities have been soured or coarsened or hardened or made irritable, have had their best potentialities atrophied and their worst side developed, by being married to the wrong person. There may be reasons why, in a particular case, it is best to stick it out. But in many cases, the sooner the parties separate (and find better-suited mates, if they can), the better for all concerned.

There is plenty of occasion in most lives to exercise patience, fortitude, and the other virtues, without adding unnecessary troubles. And it is not a very good advertisement for marriage to recommend it as a useful moral discipline. In any case, a similar argument would recommend that we continue to make the best of inadequately heated houses or badly prepared food, and add as many other discomforts as possible, in order, by enduring them and adjusting ourselves to them, to learn resignation and patience. This is sacrificing the end, human happiness, to the means. To incurable ills we must, indeed, resign ourselves, to the inevitable diversities of human nature we must adapt our-

selves. But in general, far more spiritual growth will result where people are happily married than where they are trying to make the best of an unwise marriage.

At present in about forty per cent of the divorces granted in this country there are children involved. Their welfare should certainly be the first consideration. When two people bring a child into the world their own happiness is no longer the only important matter; they are now responsible for the influences which are going to affect that child until it is of age. But although this makes the problem graver, it seldom alters it; for whatever is best for the parents is almost always best for their children. The scandal now often attaching to divorce is at present sometimes bad for the children; but there should be no scandal attaching to divorce, and will not be when our laws are sensible. Children are better off in a home with two parents if the parents are normally happy together and there is no quarrelling or tension. But if there is one thing which modern psychology has proved to the hilt, it is that a home where there are two parents and a state of strain, where the parents are at odds with each other and unhappy, is far worse for children than a tranquil home with one parent—not to speak of a possible happy home after a remarriage. Young children are extraordinarily susceptible to an environment of friction; as Bernard Shaw says, "an unhappy household is a bad nursery." Thousands of adults about us are permanently warped in body and mind —though they seldom recognize either the fact itself or its causes—because of the maladjustments in the homes in which they grew up. It is useless to think you can conceal tension from a child; he may not consciously think about it, but he will feel it and be hurt by it, in spite of your best efforts. It is, then, quite as much for the sake of the chil-

dren as for the sake of the couple themselves that we ought to end hopelessly unsuccessful marriages.

Above all, we must realize that divorce is not merely a means of ending an unhappy situation. It is a necessary means for the possible construction of a happier situation. The right of legal separation without the right to remarry misses the most important point. It is not merely a hatred of unnecessary suffering that makes liberal-minded people impatient of our absurdly irrational divorce laws, it is a sense of the surpassing importance of happy marriage, and a desire to secure it for more people. It is utopian to expect every one to choose the right partner the first time. Falling in love is like a sort of temporary insanity in its effects upon the judgment; and, however our marriage laws are improved, many people will continue to make serious mistakes. In no other field of human life do we insist that a mistake should be irremediable. If college boys or girls start in with the wrong room-mate, they are encouraged to make a change as soon as the mistake is seen. If a boy or girl goes to the wrong school, or chooses a vocation unwisely, a change is advised as soon as a better choice can be made. Marriage is the most serious and important choice of all; it should be made with the greatest care. But it is the choice concerning which it is, in many cases, most difficult to know the relevant facts beforehand. In many cases, owing to geographical separation, it is impossible for a pair to know each other very well before the marriage takes place. And even when they thought themselves very well acquainted, traits are pretty sure to crop out after marriage which were quite unsuspected. Why should these inevitable mistakes be irremediable? Ought we not rather to *encourage* the cure of obvious mistakes, and the utmost effort to find for every-

one the right mate? The first time, of course, if possible; but if not, then as soon as possible thereafter.

Practically every one has reached the point of agreeing that it is wicked to force two people who do not want to marry to do so. Is it not equally wicked for society to force two people to remain married if they do not want to do so? It is foolish to say that the result of easy facilities for divorce would be that people would change partners often, that it would lead to a frank status of "trial marriage." The fact is that most people want their marriage to be permanent. The few who prefer frequent changes would be restrained by the necessity of a delay of a year or two after signifying intention to separate. If the effect of easy divorce laws is to make marriage rasher, the thing to do is to make stricter marriage laws. But facilities for remedying mistakes do not often encourage people to make a mistake, because no one thinks he is making a mistake when he marries. A few people, perhaps, might be more willing to try it out, if they are doubtful, who would shy off from marriage if it is made practically irrevocable. This would in many cases be a good thing, since a happy marriage is the best status for the normal man or woman, and many are now deterred from trying it by the fear of being unable to undo a mistake.

What Should We Do to Improve Marriage?

The fact is, we are too much concerned over divorce, and too little over marriage. This is emphatically a case where an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. If it is wise for the State to prescribe a considerable delay before allowing people to be legally separated, it is even more important that it should prescribe delay before allowing them to marry. The old custom of the publication of banns

some time before marriage was an excellent one. As marriage is the most important step in most people's lives, an enforced wait of a year for those under twenty, and of several months for older couples, would seem none too long. Moreover, if consultation with a special judge, or adviser, is to be required before divorce is granted, it may equally well be required before marriage. A person of mature experience may be able to call to the attention of the intending partners matters bearing upon the probable success of the marriage of which they had not thought. And though lovers will seldom take advice from relatives or friends, they might take it from a dispassionate expert on marital affairs. Thus the couple would be made to look, at least, before they leap.

We shall doubtless, before long, install in all our schools a system of careful records of the health, mental traits, interests, and achievements of our boys and girls. This record would be inspected by the judge-adviser, and supplemented by renewed physical examination. Those who have serious congenital defects should be sterilized, to prevent their having children; after that rather simple operation they should be free to marry, if they can find willing mates. Those who are found to have venereal disease should be prevented from marrying until completely cured. In this way much needless misery would be avoided, and our population saved from serious deterioration in quality.

In addition to these negative precautions, we must devise positive helps to happy matings. In our modern cities many youths have quite inadequate opportunity to meet congenial mates. Every boy and girl should have abundant opportunity for wide acquaintance with youths of the other sex. For this reason co-education in high school and college is far prefer-

able for most young people. Boys and girls should meet continually, not only at dances and parties, but at their daily work, where they can more readily gauge one another's minds and morals and discover comrades of similar interests and tastes. People of philanthropic inclinations may find a good field for their energies in creating social centres where working boys and girls may meet for debating, for dramatic undertakings, for political and social work, study and recreation. Parents must take very seriously the problem of their children's marriage. They cannot choose for their children; but they can help them to a wise choice by finding them plenty of playmates and friends from their earliest years.

> The fundamental evil, in connection with the family, is mismating; but for every proposal to improve the mating system there are twenty proposals having to do with its consequences and attempting to patch up the results of mismating without even looking at the causes. It seems self-evident that reform should begin by the exhaustion of every endeavour to increase the proportion of successful matings.[1]

It is a good sign that young people are coming to talk more freely and honestly about the perplexing problems of sex and marriage and child-rearing. What is most needed, here as everywhere, is intelligence; and intelligence is fostered not by prudery and reticence, but by clear knowledge of facts, freedom from domination by prejudice or convention, and the frankest possible discussion. The reasons why desire should often be repressed are easily understood; whatever barriers to impulse and passion are reasonable will not crumble because these reasons are made explicit. On the contrary,

[1] Paul Popenoe, *The Conservation of the Family*, p. 250.

it is unintelligent conventionality that is dangerous, because it has nothing but habit and vague fears to sustain it. This whole side, perhaps the most important side, of human life is beset with morbid repressions, pathological complexes, jealousies and fears. Instead of railing at divorce, let us rail at an educational system which has left people to grope blindly with these difficult problems of love and parenthood.

It is useless to say that this side of education should be left to the home, i.e., to parents. It is precisely the parents who are ignorant, and, so often, making a mess of their own lives and those of their children. We must break the vicious circle, and introduce intelligence from the outside. The churches reach only a minority of the population; moreover, their teaching has been hopelessly inadequate, and is likely to remain so, because it is based upon old tradition rather than upon scientific knowledge. True, we must not give the impression that we have as yet anything like an adequate scientific knowledge of the relevant facts. But we have the beginnings of it, and those beginnings are worth more than any amount of mere tradition and prejudice. The churches have to some extent persuaded people to curb selfishness and passion; but any mental hygienist can point to many cases where such self-control, however rigid, has left a situation of strain, misunderstanding, and unhappiness. The traditional classification of impulses as good or evil, and of people as virtuous or wicked, is far from adequate; we must unravel the complexities of human nature and learn how to guide its multitudinous tendencies toward the richest and most harmonious development.

How far may husband and wife legitimately follow their own ideals, satisfy their own desires, and how far should each be bound by the wishes and needs of the other? This

is a problem with infinitely varied ramifications. Certainly marriage imposes serious obligations which must often limit the pursuit of personal ends. And it is the job of husband and wife to try in every reasonable way to make the other happy, even at great sacrifice. But this implies that each must refrain from needlessly thwarting the other in the following of his own ideals and the development of his own personality. A domineering attitude, an over-exacting attitude, a tendency on the part of either to make decisions for both, should be clearly labelled as selfishness. Above all, jealousy is the poisoner of married life. Genuine love welcomes for the loved one the greatest possible enrichment of life, rather than seeking to close the door to all other attachments and affections. As Mr. Wells has so aptly said, "Jealousy is the measure of self-love in love."

We cannot here discuss these tangled problems. We can only emphasize again the fundamental principle that what we are aiming at is human happiness; not merely the happiness of the husband, or of the wife, or of the children, but the greatest total of happiness for all concerned. If we keep that ideal steadfastly in mind, we shall be well prepared for solving the problems as they arise.

CHAPTER X

IRRESPONSIBLE PARENTHOOD

Should We Insist Upon Education For Parenthood?

THE most important work in the world is that of securing the health and moulding the minds of children. To an extent that we are only just beginning to realize, our happiness and success depend upon the bodily vigour and the mental capacity which we inherited, and upon the influences that played upon us during the first dozen years or so of our lives. Our inherited capital of bodily vigour may be squandered or increased. Our defects may be corrected or may be allowed to develop into a serious handicap. But our character and our attitude toward life are formed very largely during our earliest years. If a boy or girl grows up timid, self-centred, morose, ill-tempered, lazy, self-indulgent, or in any other way abnormal, it is almost always, in chief measure, the fault of the parents. The fault may be a lack of patient effort, a lack of insight and skill, or a defect of character, a warped outlook, in the parent; usually it is a combination of all of these things. The job of being a parent is more important even than that of being a good husband or wife. It is the most important job in the world. And it is, in general, the worst performed.

Education for parenthood should go hand in hand with education for marriage, as one of the primary objectives of schooling. And this in spite of the fact that children will

increasingly be put in the hands of experts, from the nursery school on. For parents must learn to be wise critics of the educational processes which they delegate to others. And there will always remain an enormous direct influence of the parent upon the child.

It is necessary to learn how to exercise this influence without imposing unnecessary or too prolonged authority. From the beginning the parent must work to develop the child's own personality. He must guide the child into ways of thought and conduct which seem to him wise, at the same time teaching the child to become a critic of those ways. He must be willing to see the child questioning and rejecting his ideas, and becoming different. He must take to heart Emerson's dictum, "Don't try to make your child another you; one's enough!" He must expect the child to come to care more for others than for his parents; that is normal. Many a parent errs gravely by trying to retain chief place in his child's affection. In short, he must know when to direct and when to relinquish. After giving all he has to give, he must learn to give up.

Education for parenthood, then, is a very complex matter. It is not so much a special subject for the curriculum as a motivation for the study and correlation of many subjects. Indeed, the newer educational theory works not in terms of *subjects,* but of *objectives.* Hygiene, psychology, ethics, sociology, take on a new significance when viewed from this angle. A typical illustration of recent educational movements is the establishment of a Division of Euthenics at Vassar College, for "the study of the controllable environment and its adaptations for the improvement of the individual, and hence of the race, through increased efficiency, mental and physical. It represents an attempt to bring

together and correlate the resources of modern science which bear upon the problems of living, with special emphasis on the home and the family."

We are coming to realize that all school-teachers must be not only versed in their own particular subjects, but reasonably expert in child-guidance. Christian ministers, too, could well afford less knowledge of Hebrew or Greek or Jewish and Ecclesiastical History and substitute a scientific study of human instincts and needs, to the great advantage of their preaching and pastoral work. Mental hygienists, community nurses, social workers, and physicians have an extremely important rôle. But the parent remains the central figure in the process of producing a healthier and happier race. No one has a right to be a parent unless he is willing to take this responsibility with utmost seriousness and to fit himself for its discharge.

Have All Married People a Right to Be Parents?

It is still customary in some quarters to applaud large families, without even raising the question whether the parents have good congenital qualities to bequeath, whether they are healthy and vigorous, whether they have the means to provide for their children a proper environment and education. Amidst the wars and perils of primitive life the replenishing of the numbers of a tribe was naturally considered an imperious duty; and the human race in general still retains that primitive attitude. But with the huge populations and low death rate of today the need is rather for checking births. Certainly there are many cases in which parenthood, far from being a virtue, is either a piece of wanton carelessness or a cruel self-indulgence.

In the first place, women who are not physically sound and

strong ought not to be having children, since the children of sickly or defective mothers are heavily handicapped at the outset of their lives. And all children ought to be so spaced that the health of the mothers is not seriously impaired. Old graveyards, family Bibles, daguerreotypes, tell a pathetic story of women aged at forty, dying at fifty, leaving perhaps half a dozen children out of a dozen, the others having been borne only to die. The Children's Bureau at Washington reports that more than fifteen thousand women in the United States still die annually in childbirth, a large proportion of them because they were not well enough to go through the ordeal. The number of sickly, defective, abnormal children born every year is appalling. To some extent the physical defects or diseased condition of the fathers is responsible. In more cases it is the weakness of the mother, often the result of too much child-bearing. Is it not high time that we ceased looking upon a wedding ceremony as a license to give unrestrained play to the parental instinct? We ostracize the unmarried mother who is physically well and competent to bring up her child skilfully in a pleasant home, while we condone the married mother and father who lower the racial inheritance by bringing into the world sickly or defective children. There is reason for insisting upon the wedding ceremony; it is a handle by which the State can to some degree avert the irresponsible union of lovers. But the crux of the evil is irresponsible parenthood; and there is far more of that within than without the married state.

The quality of the human race is of supreme importance. If we used half the skill in breeding men that we use in breeding horses and cows, dogs and pigs and chickens, we could, within a few centuries, have a race of people far

sounder of body and mind, far brainier, far freer from pathological drives and inhibitions, than the earth has ever seen. Our liberty-loving people are not in a temper to submit to compulsory eugenic laws, beyond the most pressingly necessary; indeed, in view of the type of legislators and executives we have to put up with at present, it would be a dubious proceeding to push eugenic legislation very far. All the more reason why we must be educated to voluntary compliance with eugenic principles.

No human being likes to think of himself as "inferior." But the fact remains that some individuals have far greater mental capacity, and a more normal endowment of instincts, than others. We can draw no line and say that those whose I. Q's are below that should have no children. But it is of surpassing importance that the brainy people, the people of sound minds and high native ability, should be having children, and that the distinctly subnormal and pathological should not be having them.

Moreover, to bring up children well takes a good deal of money—for space and privacy, outdoor sports, nourishing food, proper clothing, doctor's bills, and all the education that is desirable. It is a harsh fact, but a fact that must be faced, that the really poor cannot bring up children properly. That is the best argument there is for the abolition of poverty, for a more equal distribution of wealth, or for state support of children, as well as for the extension of our present system of free education, free libraries, free medical clinics, free playgrounds, and so on. Let us hope that the time will come when it will not be necessary to refrain from having children because one is too poor. But at present it is, in many cases, an imperious duty. Hard on a married couple? Yes, our economic order *is* hard on the poor. But it is

clearly not right to gratify the parental instincts of people at the expense of the children. One has but to go about the poorer quarters of our cities to see swarms of children growing up anæmic, stunted, ill-bred, the victims of all sorts of complexes and phobias. They will have to go to work early, with little education, because their parents are poor. How can we expect to solve the problems of our democracy if these are to be the citizens! Of course, native ambition or some favoring circumstance *may* develop a sickly or defective child into a very useful person. An ill-bred child may overcome the handicap of neglect. But in laying down duties we must go on probabilities, we must not tolerate needless handicaps.

We must beware of generalities about "lower classes" and "upper classes." But it is probable that, *on the average,* the "upper classes" are of somewhat higher mental capacity than the "lower classes"; *one* of the causes (though by no means the only cause) of class-stratification is superiority of intelligence. It is obvious that upper class people are, on the average, healthier in body and mind, because of their better environment and better education. It is still more obvious that they have, on the average, much better facilities for giving their children what they need. It is a fact, proved by recent studies, that the majority of gifted children come from upper class homes. Hence it is disturbing to find that the lower classes in general greatly outbreed the upper classes. There is a good deal of truth in the familiar saying that our race is dying out at the top. The birth rate tends to fall everywhere with the progress of civilization; but it has fallen much faster among the richer and more cultured classes. The birth rate among defectives and morons is sometimes as high as 70 per 1000. Among some of our

alien groups it is around 40 or 50 per 1000. In New York City in a recent year the average rate among the foreign-born was 38, among the native-born 16, while in the typically "American" sections it was around 7 per 1000. Among college graduates in this country it is about 6, among the graduates of the women's colleges and in the families of eminent "men of science," etc., it is still lower. The blunt fact is that, on the whole, the better stocks are not reproducing themselves. The older American stock is slowly dying out. College graduates are leaving behind them gradually dwindling numbers. Meantime the masses of people who are not particularly able, not well educated, not in a position to bring up their children well, are constantly increasing. To considerable extent a differential death rate counteracts this differential birth rate. But with increasing public expenditures for health, and our increasing control over disease, the death rate of all classes is going lower and lower; and we are face to face with the fact of inadequate reproduction of the superior types, together with excessive reproduction of the inferior types, of our race.

In some way we must persuade upper class people, and especially people of markedly superior stock, to have more children, and persuade the masses of people of poorer stock and poorer environment to have fewer. But how?

How Can We Control Birth Control?

One of the most depressing aspects of the situation is the widespread prejudice among the lower classes against birth control. The responsibility for this prejudice lies squarely upon the nationalists and upon the churches which base their teachings upon ancient tradition. The prejudice was useful in the old days when a tribe needed every fighting

man it could breed. But today it is sheer anachronism. The population of the world has more than doubled during the past century. In many parts of the world the population is already too great for comfortable subsistence; when crops are bad there is not food enough to go round. And though we have still untilled land in our own country, the present rate of growth will find us before very long, as history goes, overcrowded and *compelled* to lower the natural birth rate. In early times disease and war and famine kept populations from increasing too fast; every once in a while some plague took a heavy toll. Yet even so, populations increased. They increased when the death rate was around 50 per 1000. In the United States in 1900 the death rate was 17.6 per 1000, in 1919, 13 per 1000; it will no doubt eventually fall as low as the rate in Australia and New Zealand—around 9 per 1000. Natural human fecundity is far too great to balance against such a death rate. Do we want to return to the natural checks, famine and war? Scientific farming, possible synthetic food production, and so on, may enable us to support a much more crowded population than would now be possible. But evidently the population must stop increasing sometime. "Eventually, why not now?"

There is a certain optimum population for every country. Beyond that point there is less wealth per capita, there is overcrowding in cities, congestion of traffic, danger of unemployment, a rapid exhaustion of the earth's resources, and continual temptation to war on the part of the densely populated countries. Mr. Maynard Keynes is obviously right when he says,

> The time has come already when each country needs a considered national policy about what size of popula-

> tion, whether larger or smaller than at present, or the same, is most expedient. And having settled this policy, we must take steps to carry it into operation.[1]

What plan have the opponents of birth control for avoiding the evils of overpopulation? They have none. They are content to let things drift. The nationalists point to the rapidly increasing population in other countries and realize the peril that will come from their wanting a larger "place in the sun." But instead of trying, by international action, to bring in a policy of universal limitation of population, they call upon us to rival other nations in the race toward overpopulation. The ecclesiastical opponents of birth control call it unnatural, failing to realize that everything that differentiates civilization from brutehood is, in exactly the same sense, unnatural. The control of conception will come to be looked upon as an elementary matter of hygiene, like using a toothbrush, or soap, or antiseptics, or anæsthetics, or being vaccinated. All of these things are "unnatural." They are triumphs of human intelligence over nature. What is intelligence for, if not to be used?

The evil of our present situation is that birth control is practised by most upper class people, practised indeed too much by many of them, while it is not practised much by the classes who ought to be practising it. Birth control is here to stay, but it needs to be controlled. Upper class people are in general intelligent enough and free enough from domination by ecclesiastical authority to control the size of their families. At the other end of the scale, the professional prostitutes, being also free from church influence, and having

[1] Maynard Keynes, *Laissez Faire and Communism*, p. 70.

imperative need of the knowledge, hand on to one another the simple technique required. It is the mass of honest, religious, married people who are ignorant or dominated by the taboo against limitation of offspring. The obvious need is for free clinics, and a good deal of teaching by social workers and physicians. Most of these poorer people will be grateful for guidance in limiting their families; they do not want a lot of children; they either do not know how to help themselves, or they believe the teaching of their church, that they must "let nature take its course."

There will be many incidental benefits from the popularizing of a sensible attitude towards the control of conception. Many married couples will be happier when relieved of the strain of having too large families. There will seldom be recourse to that highly dangerous operation, abortion, which is now practised by hundreds of thousands of women every year in our country alone and causes the death of several thousand. Illegitimate births will be greatly lessened in numbers. More couples will feel free to marry in their younger years—which will mean not only more happiness for them but a decrease in prostitution. As that profound observer, Judge Lindsey, says,

> Many a young couple could live together happily on a little money if they had no babies; and later, as their income increased . . . they could have the babies, and would. As it is, they marry on a little; have babies when they can't afford them; and are dragged down and worn out by a burden too heavy for their shoulders. For these reasons, thousands of them are coming into the domestic relations and divorce courts. The woman becomes a neurotic drudge, and the husband finds life converted into a treadmill. Their dreams have vanished, and

thereafter they worry along as best they can—or if they can't, get a divorce.[2]

The problem of poverty will be vastly relieved, since overlarge families are largely responsible therefor. Children will not so often be born to die, or to grow up neglected, but will come only to couples who have planned for them and can take care of them. The dissemination of harmful advice by quack doctors and ignorant friends will die a natural death when scientific knowledge is available to all.

There are few problems where the clash between the old morality and the new can be more clearly seen. As Mr. Wells has lately said,

> There are some questions that really serve to classify men's minds. . . . Fairly put and fairly answered they reveal the quality, or rather let me say the key and colour, of a mind quite definitively. . . . One of these test questions is birth control, because on your belief whether that is possible and desirable, or whether it is not, hang logically and necessarily, all your ideas of the competition of types, peoples and races, and of the possibility of socialism and world peace. If you can believe it is possible, then world peace is possible, and if you think it is impossible, all talk of world peace is just sentimental foolishness or a humbugging preparation for propaganda in the next war.[3]

But what is the state of public intelligence on this important matter? A few years ago the New York State legislature held public hearings on a bill to permit doctors and trained nurses to give information on birth control. Eccle-

[2] Ben Lindsey, *The Revolt of Modern Youth*, p. 202.
[3] In the *New York Times*, July 24, 1927.

siastical speakers protested that the bill was "a product of materialistic philosophy" and "ignored God." A Roman Catholic judge called it a "crime against the community." A former state superintendent of public instruction asserted that "this propaganda is an insult to the morality of the community. . . . Those who bring this measure here ought to be sent to jail with persons who circulated the birth control literature." The outraged legislators refused to report the bill out of committee.

There we are! As clear-cut a conflict between prejudice and reason as we could find! But the United States is now the only progressive nation where it is a crime to give information upon birth control, and these legal obstacles will doubtless soon be removed.

There will still remain much to do. We must combat the authority of the tradition-bound churches in this matter. We must educate the poorer classes to see the advantages of small families. What will be hardest will be to persuade those who are of distinctly inferior stock to refrain from having *any* children. The State must interfere in the case of people with marked inheritable defects or diseases which might injure children. But this will not suffice. We must persuade people to be willing to sacrifice their parental instincts, or to partially satisfy them by adopting children, when it is not for the good of the nation or the race or the children themselves that they should beget them. And on the other hand we must somehow persuade more upper class couples, of first-rate physical and mental calibre, to perpetuate their blood and spend their energies in raising fine specimens of boy- and girlhood.

One hopeful aspect of the matter is that the birth rate almost always declines with a rise in the standard of living.

It is because upper class people have so many other interests, want so many other things, and because they want these things for their children, if they are to have any, that they are warier about bringing children into the world. Probably the quickest way to get the masses to have fewer children will be to increase their *wants.*

May Women Let Careers Interfere With Motherhood?

The great majority of women have always had careers, of a sort; they have worked as hard as men, or harder. And it has not occurred to them to give up having children because they lacked time and means to give them proper care. Children have usually just "growed up," like Topsy; and that is why we are the sort of people we mostly are—made in the image of God, no doubt, but in a sadly distorted image. . . . On the other hand, the "lady" would not "demean" herself by working; her ideal was to be, in the ironic words of a recent writer, "a cross between a butterfly and a setting hen." She has had servants to do the housework, and has given her time in varying proportion to her children and her social pleasures. The coveted status was to be a "lady of leisure."

This ideal is now fast disappearing, except among the "smart set." Women, like men, are becoming ashamed to be idle. And this is an obvious gain; for there is an unlimited amount of work to be done to make human life safer, richer, and happier; and a woman has no more moral right than a man to be a parasite. At the same time a large part of woman's traditional work has been taken out of the home. The right to vote has brought in its wake the desire to be economically independent. So upper class girls are increasingly taking up "careers."

Now it is clearly all to the good for an unmarried woman to have a vocation by which she can support herself. She is apt to be more normal in mind than her economically helpless sister, and has a place of her own in the world instead of being a "meaningless, detached female." She is under no pressure to marry, can await the right man and marry only if she meets him. If she marries, her marriage is more apt to be successful, both because of her more careful choosing and because, with her vocational experience, she is likely to be a better comrade for her husband. She is better able to meet her husband's business failure, illness, or death.

Undoubtedly women must work, and must be able to earn their livings. But the following situation has arisen: The less educated and stupider girls are not deterred by love of their jobs from marrying, nor, even if they have to keep on working outside their homes, from having children. For them the prescription is, better education, better living conditions, reasonable birth control. . . . On the other hand, the more educated and cleverer girls are apt to be so interested in their careers that they are not eager to marry, or, if they do marry, to have children. Here we have one of the causes—and one that is increasingly effective—of the "dying out of the race at the top." What prescription have we to give these able young women, the very ones who ought to be mothers of the coming generation, who are preferring careers to children?

Let us consider the problem from the point of view of the young woman. If she has normal instincts she will want to marry whenever she meets the man who wins her love (the community must see to it that she has plenty of chances to meet him). But she does not want children. So she either

shies off from marriage or marries on the understanding that they will have no children, at least for a while. . . . But why does she shirk having children?

Well, in the first place, for most young couples the financial sacrifice is great. If the wife gives up her vocation to bear and rear the children, their earnings are cut somewhere near in half, while their expenses are greatly increased. Educated people know how much money it takes to bring up children well; they know the value of beauty and culture, of books, music, art, of privacy, sanitary bathrooms, a properly balanced diet, vacations, trips to Europe, and all the advantages of civilization which the "lower classes" are resigned to going without.

If, on the other hand, the wife resumes her vocation, after her confinements, she faces difficult problems. Will her health stand the strain of carrying it on while she also keeps up her home and cares for her children? Can she afford competent help? Can she *find* competent help? It is too bad that a highly trained woman, capable of valuable service to society, should have to drop her career, lose her salary, and vanish within the walls of a home to take care of one or two children. But proper care for her children, if she has them, is, as she knows, her first responsibility. Is it any wonder that she often chooses to avoid marriage, or, at least, to avoid having children? What are we going to do about it?

Of course we can, and should, try to create public opinion against the relative sterility of the upper classes. But it is not enough to preach at them, we must somehow solve the problems involved. At least two things can, and must be done.

First, some form of "maternity endowment," or "mothers' pensions" must be put into operation. The work of bearing

children and bringing them up well is the most useful work that can be done in any community; and parents ought not to be financially penalized for doing it, at least not so heavily penalized as they now are. Except for the small class of rich people, having children is bound anyway to involve sacrifice, financial as well as physical; the parental instinct, the pride and joy in well nurtured children, will offset a good deal of that. But married people ought not to be confronted with the fact that having children will mean a perilous lowering of their standard of living. We do not want them to lower their standard of living (except as it may include needless luxury and extravagance). Those of us who have no children ought to be willing to be taxed to help the State provide proper upbringing for other people's children. There are a number of ways in which this can be done, some of them in successful operation in various parts of the world. The direct contribution of the State, or of the various industries, to the support of children is more sensible than the attempt to pay every man a "family wage" sufficient for the "average family" of five. For, though that may be the average family, many men are bachelors, and of the married men only a small proportion have, in a given year, three children under fifteen, while some have four or five. The "equal pay for equal work" movement is, in any case, breaking down the "family wage for the man" system. We are moving towards paying men and women alike, i.e., whatever they earn individually. The necessary corollary of that —unless we want the more intelligent people to balk at lowering their living standards by having children—is a contribution by the community to the support of its children.

By doing this we shall not only be helping intelligent couples to the happiness and community service of rearing

children, we shall be helping the improvident poor to bring up the children which they will have anyway. The recurrent inspection of children, to see that the subsidies were properly spent, would be an excellent thing and ought to help in raising the level of child welfare. If the community were to subsidize only three children, say, of ordinary couples, but a greater number of children of couples who could pass standard physical and mental tests with a high grade, we should have a practicable method of making eugenic progress, or at least of counteracting, to some extent, our tendencies to eugenic retrogression.

In the second place, we should forthwith set about training thousands of teachers for nursery schools and kindergartens, and establishing such schools in every community. It is perfectly feasible for a healthy woman to carry on a successful career and bring up her children at the same time, if she can get expert care for them during her working hours. If the children can be put in the hands of skilled child-rearers during these hours, after the first year, they are likely to be much better off than if the mother has exclusive care of them. We must get rid of the superstition that the act of bearing a child somehow mysteriously endows a woman with the very intricate skill necessary to bring up children well.

The following cases, cited in a recent magazine article, could be paralleled in the experience of most of us:

> We have a nurse, Miss Smith. She sleeps in the baby's room and tends him with manifold devotion. . . . She treats her job as a profession and does it well. . . . It would take a good deal of argument to convince me—as many have tried—that I ought to drop my work, which I do fairly well, in order to take sole care of our baby, which I should do fairly badly. I did not begrudge the

> few months I took off at the time of his birth; and if his welfare demanded it, neither my husband nor I would hesitate to throw up our chances of success to minister to his. But unfortunately for sentiment he is the healthiest child on the block. He is fat and boisterous and blooming as a rose. . . . In regard to the others, Miss Smith brings home harrowing tales. She is sacrificing an afternoon off every week to tell them how to care for their children.

The mother, or intending mother, must, of course, see to it that her health is not impaired by her work. But that is a problem for industry to solve; no work should be so gruelling as to impair the health of its workers. With the general improvement of working conditions and shortening of working hours, which is one of our real achievements in America, women ought to be able to be wage-earners and still have abundant energy left for their home life. The position of school-teacher, with its five- or six-hour day, is particularly advantageous for mothers; and it is to be earnestly hoped that school boards will encourage married women to hold positions in the schools.

But all depends upon the existence of plenty of expert nurses and teachers for young children. Since such a vocation would fit a woman in eminent degree to be a mother herself, it ought to appeal to many girls. And if every community were to establish a nursery school, the demand for nurse-teachers would soon create a supply.

Many problems remain. We have only scratched the surface of a very complicated situation. But whatever expedients we urge, the fundamental thing is to spread the conviction that parenthood is a very serious matter, not to be undertaken lightly, not to be shirked when undertaken. Some

people should feel a responsibility for having children, others for not having them. All who do have children should know that they are responsible for the health, the intelligence, the morals of the human beings they have brought into the world. There is no greater wickedness than irresponsible parenthood.

CHAPTER XI

CORRUPT POLITICS

What Is "Corruption" in Politics?

"CORRUPTION" in politics consists in working for one's own personal profit rather than for the public interest. The immediate aim of the "corrupt" politician may be re-election; it may even be party loyalty; but his ultimate motive in serving his party, and in getting elected, is to increase his private fortune. Public officials are on salary. "Corruption" consists in adding to that salary, getting into one's pockets additional moneys not fairly earned by public service, thereby defrauding the public. Incidental to this "graft" is the blocking of needed legislation and the passing of undesirable laws, because there are those who can afford to pay, directly or indirectly, for the maintenance of their privileges or the furthering of their interests.

In every country of the world this looting of the public goes on, in greater or lesser degree. The total "rake-off" in our federal, state and local politics has been variously estimated; but there can be no doubt that it amounts to hundreds of millions of dollars a year. The ways in which it is done are very various. Sinecure offices may be created; appropriations for non-existent secretaries, motor-cars, and imaginary "expenses" of all sorts, may be voted. Appropriations for buildings and public improvements may be greater

than the market price, with a "commission" secretly paid to the politician who engineered it. Or the politician may have a financial interest in the contracting company. Or advance information of the passage of a bill for public improvements may permit the politician to secure real estate options which will yield him a handsome profit. And of course he may accept bribes, direct or indirect, for his vote for laws favorable to some wealthy corporation. Or he may blackmail the corporation by threat of passing legislation adverse to its interests. And he may collect tribute from people engaged in illegal business—bootleggers, drug sellers, keepers of gambling-houses, opium joints, or houses of prostitution—in return for protecting them from the penalties of the law.

This "protection" of socially undesirable activities, and all the diversion of money into the pockets of the politicians, is bad enough. But the most serious aspect of corruption is the blocking of needed legislation. It usually takes many years of struggle to get any important bill passed, if there are interests to whose financial detriment the legislation would be. The parcel post, obvious public convenience as it is, was staved off for a long period; the express companies, which stood to suffer from its competition, were rich and powerful. Laws checking the waste of natural resources, laws regulating child labour, laws requiring the installation of safety devices, laws protecting the health of workers and the living conditions of the poor, pure food laws, laws forbidding misrepresentation of merchandise—such laws, and hundreds of others, have been blocked and are now being blocked, not because there is any even plausible argument against them, but because it is to the financial interest of certain groups to oppose them, and because a sufficient num-

ber of politicians prefer to fatten their pocketbooks rather than work disinterestedly for the common weal.

Corrupt politicians are usually unaware that they are corrupt. Now and then one encounters frank and unblushing cynicism on the part of an office-holder or political "boss." But most men instinctively and habitually "rationalize" their acts, in order to stand well in their own estimation. The power of words, and of thoughts, to mask ugly reality, and to offer apparently sound reasons for wrong conduct, is almost unlimited. Corporations commonly employ clever attorneys and agents, whose business it is to make their interest appear to be the public interest. Few politicians are trained to understand political and economic issues. They follow the leader; they echo his high-sounding but specious deliverances; they are as easily satisfied by arguments which make in the direction where their personal interests lie as the pious believer by the "evidences" of the truth of his creed. They find their friends and associates following this line of least resistance; their herd-instinct often suffices in itself to prevent their defying or exposing their fellows. Moreover, if they do attempt to follow an austerer code of their own, they offend their fellows, they set the Powers That Be against them, they arouse a storm of criticism and calumny; they fail of renomination or re-election. The political machines can brook no independents. And so, by a continued process of weeding out incipient reformers, the easy-going, money-making standards of politics are maintained.

Occasionally a thoroughly honest man of dominating personality, favoured by fortune, gets into high office; and then we have a tempest of house-cleaning, and a push toward social progress. If such a man, besides being honest

and able, has also genuine insight into the needs of the times, careful training in political methods, and the ability to win popular support, he may make great contributions to the public welfare, and leave the level of our political or industrial machinery permanently higher. But such a combination of circumstances is rare. For the most part the public business is carried on by inadequately trained men, of mediocre ability, whose accession to office has been secured for them by a party, primarily because they are "loyal party men." They refrain from exposing the graft of their superiors and associates, they accept, however unconsciously, the theory that politics should yield a fair profit to the politicians. To be sure, they temper this connivance and collective selfishness by other motives, in varying degree. Patriotism *may* mean something more to them, at times, than waving the flag and boasting of their country's greatness; it *may* mean, on occasion, actually putting the public welfare first, if the occasion becomes dramatic and public attention is focused upon it. Or they may get sincerely aroused over some "cause," and give it precedence over their personal interests. Human motives are usually mixed; the ambition to keep in office, the lure of financial profit, is not the whole story. But most men find it easy to accept the arguments which identify the public interest with their own. And by and large, so long as graft is being legally got, most politicians will want some share.

We must realize that here, as in most moral problems, *blame* is of little avail. Our whole "capitalistic" conception of business is that we are in it to make money. And politics is just the *business* of the politicians. The ethics of politics reflects the ethics of business. The corporations, which are responsible for the large-scale profits of the politicians, are

simply following our individualistic make-money-as-you-can standards. What happens is not, usually, thought of as "bribery"; it is "support," "recognition," it is "legal fees," "commissions," "tips," a *quid pro quo* of some sort, fair enough according to the accepted practices of our times. Indeed, the politicians' end of it is, in the more important cases, simply correlative to the business men's end. The former get their living, the latter get theirs, by a mutual furthering of interests. And whatever is "good for business," is, in America of the Twentieth Century, deemed *ipso facto* desirable. "Business prosperity" means the making of large profits by the class of owners of industrial and commercial concerns. It is by no means necessarily identical with industrial and commercial *efficiency,* or with the welfare of the community as a whole. Indeed, it may be sharply opposed to both. Nevertheless it is, at present, the honest ideal of the overwhelming majority of those whose personal fortunes are furthered by it. And to call these respectable and "leading" citizens "crooks," or any other derogatory name, is to imply more than we mean. These friends of ours are living, in general, by their lights. According to the dominant individualistic morality of American life, they are hardly to be blamed for trying to make all the money they can, within the law. The "new morality," the morality which puts the welfare of the *community* first, which thinks of business and of politics as primarily public service, and only secondarily as means of making a living, has not bitten into their consciousness. And we might as well be frank enough to admit that we can expect nothing else of ordinary human beings so long as the opportunities for personal profiteering are abundant and the rewards of grafting are great. We must lessen the *opportunities.*

CORRUPT POLITICS

Are We Drifting Into a "Plutocracy"?

When "business" is as powerful and wealthy as it is in America today, it is inevitable that it should seek to control legislation. Billions of dollars more may be made by certain corporations if "protective" tariff laws are passed. This money will, in effect, be taken from the consumers, and from the manufacturers of products for export, according to well-known economic laws. The net effect upon the *community* will be loss. But the loss to a single individual is slight, the gain to the small group of manufacturers great. Moreover, the utter lack of economic education in our people makes most of them utterly unaware of their loss, and indeed —so powerful is the effect of clever propaganda—staunch supporters of the principle of "protection." . . . This is typical. A large part of the legislation on our statute books is there because it is to the advantage of certain powerful groups. Meanwhile, hundreds of bills which would make for the *general* welfare are killed in our legislatures every year.

The result is the state of things which is commonly called "plutocracy." That term is not intended to mean that the rich hold office, or openly dictate policy; it means that usually the interests of the rich, and particularly of the big corporations, are the deciding factor in guiding such legislation as affects them. And that is, directly or indirectly, the greater part of our more important legislation. It is well known that some of our States have been practically "run" by certain great combinations of corporations, or even, predominantly, by a single great corporation. It is well known in these instances because the control has been exerted rather openly. But the steady pressure of the business world upon politicians is not usually apparent upon the surface. We all

know that politics are run by *parties,* and we know that parties are usually run by *rings.* But we do not realize that the party bosses, who dictate party policy, usually make considerable personal fortunes; and we do not ask how they do it, or connect this fact with the success and failure of this or that bill.

Foreign observers see this aspect of American life more clearly than most of us do—and more clearly than they see the more or less similar situation in their own country. For here there is so much more money to spend, and the stakes are so much greater, that the *scale* of graft is far greater than is usually possible in other countries.

> When I read what Americans write about political questions, I usually feel an insufficient realization of the control of politics by finance. Those who emphasize it, like Upton Sinclair, are thought to be muck-rakers, cynics and cranks.[1]
>
> All experts agree that no country has such a plutocracy as the United States.[2]
>
> One may conjure up a practical end to democracy in the vision of a State "run" entirely by a group of highly forcible and intelligent persons . . . financiers and their associates, their perfected mechanism of party elections working the elections boldly and capably, and their public policy being directed towards financial ends.[3]
>
> In America, in the heart of a democracy theoretically the freest the world has ever known, has arisen a sinister and ingenious contrivance known as the

[1] Bertrand Russell, in the *New Republic.*
[2] Gustav Schmoller, Professor of Political Economy at the University of Berlin, quoted by Professor Giddings of Columbia University, in an address before the Nineteenth Century Club, in 1904.
[3] H. G. Wells, *Anticipations,* p. 170.

> "machine." . . . The history of the "machine" shows that when the spirit of social discipline has fallen below a certain level, and the spirit of disobedience infected the rulers as well as the ruled, democracy sinks into a state of helplessness in which the will of the people cannot express itself further, and cannot give full effect to the laws in which it has expressed itself already.[4]

To these comments by distinguished foreigners we might add any number of illuminating statements by discerning American observers. Two must suffice.

> Today political corruption is menacing not only because all corruption is immoral and anti-democratic, but because it represents the intrusion into politics of a disciplined and aggressive plutocracy.[5]

> It is not likely that rich men, by virtue of their riches, will ever become the ruling class in this country, in the open. The natural operation of jealousy and envy will take care of that. . . . But that rich men should endeavour to control legislation, local and national, in their own interest, and to secure influence and thus to become a ruling class in secret, is more than likely. It is natural. It is a fact.[6]

The discouraging aspect of the situation is that public opinion seems to be accepting graft more and more as a matter of course. George Washington, when president, dismissed an attorney general with a distinguished record, for an offence that would seem relatively minor today; dismissed him with anger and contempt, which were shared by the people of the infant nation. President Grant

[4] L. P. Jacks, in the *Hibbert Journal*, Vol. 11, p. 22.
[5] W. E. Weyl, *The New Democracy*, p. 97.
[6] Henry van Dyke, *Essays in Application*, p. 57.

attempted to shield a member of his cabinet convicted of graft, and was overwhelmed by a wave of popular indignation. During President Harding's administration scandals involving three members of the cabinet, on a scale surpassing any previous looting of the public, left his prestige and that of the Republican party hardly affected. The leaders of American business, and most of the upper class metropolitan newspapers, glossed over the whole wretched business and sought to divert attention to malicious accusations trumped up against the public-spirited men who sought to expose the offenders. . . . And we are so used to corruption in state and municipal politics that when a senator is sent to Congress by the most barefaced fraud, or when a mayor is elected in one of our great cities who is known by everybody to be a crook and a "lowbrow" of the most vulgar sort, we shrug our shoulders and turn to read the sporting news.

But just as it does no good, in the long run, to blame the grafters, so it does no good to blame the public. Apathetic and discouraged we are. But it is largely because, the system being what it is, we feel helpless. The country is so big, our cities even as big, and so flooded by masses of half-assimilated immigrants, that the intelligent voter, realizing how infinitesimal is his influence, is tempted to say "What's the use?" and to stay away from the polls altogether. . . . Obviously, before a democracy can function intelligently, the great mass of voters must be intelligent. And the bald fact is, that we have hardly begun to train our citizens in political and social intelligence. The cultured classes have scarcely more wisdom in these practical matters of statecraft than the uneducated masses. They have learned a little Latin and French, a little algebra and geometry, a little literature and art, but they have not learned to understand the simplest

economic laws or the most elementary laws of political efficiency. We must have, not more education of the present sort, but a different kind of education, which will fit our citizens to be critics of their laws and their legislators. Instead of an intermittent restlessness and discouragement, we shall then have intelligently concrete criticism and a real hope for constructive improvement.

But we must not expect the citizen to develop the ability either to devise legislation to meet the intricate situations of modern life, or to pick the experts whose training and native ability fit them to devise and administer the laws. Ninety-nine per cent of our people are too busy (and too bored with the matter) to study and form an intelligent opinion upon the complex concrete problems that confront our legislators and administrators, or to judge in advance of the specific qualifications for this and that office of the numerous candidates who, under our present system, solicit their vote. . . . In short, democracy, as at present conceived, expects of ordinary people what it is foolish and futile to expect.

What Can Be Done to "Purify" Politics?

Our first need is to recognize that human nature is likely to remain about the same, that preaching at people and scolding them is, in the long run, of little avail, that reform movements are always spasmodic and short-lived. We must realize that it is our *system of elections* that is wrong, and put all our effort into changing the *system.* The system worked faily well when communities were small, when voters knew their candidates personally, when every citizen could feel that his vote would count. In the vast communities and the complicated society of today, it works

very badly. In fact, our present system plays, as we see, straight into the hands of the professional, profiteering politicians.

Three things, at least, can be done. We can make it easier for the citizen to vote intelligently; we can make the vote of each citizen *count,* so that he will cease to feel so helpless, and take an interest in voting; we can put into operation forces that will secure more trained experts, and fewer ignorant but docile party men, for public office.

First, we can make it easier for the citizen to vote intelligently. Apart from the education in social and political problems which the schools and colleges of the future must provide, there are three steps which should be taken at once.

One of these steps is to make sure that only *a short ballot* is ever presented to the voter. It is utterly silly to expect the voter to inform himself, or even to interest himself, in the qualifications for office of a dozen or a score (or more) of candidates. In a municipal election, let the citizen vote for one, or at most two or three, commissioners, and for no one else. A small board of commissioners, elected by districts (of which they need not be resident), or at large, should hold office for some years (subject to recall), with only a part of their membership elected at a single election. They should be responsible for the whole management of the city's affairs, though they will not themselves do the work. The voter's attention being concentrated upon the handful of candidates for the one or two openings as commissioner in a given year, he will give the matter the whole of the attention which he has to spare for politics. For this one elective office men of distinction may be persuaded to run. And there is a fighting chance that the issue, not confused by a host of offices and candidates, may be simple and plain

enough to lead to a reasonably intelligent choice. . . . The same principle can be used in state and national elections. One official at a time is enough to vote for at an election. Three offices at a time should be the upper limit—in national affairs, these would be president, senator, and representative.

The second help to intelligent voting will be to insist upon *a sharp division between national, state, and local elections.* Not only must these three elections be held at different seasons, but the use of national party names and emblems on state and local ballots must be forbidden. There is no connection between national political issues and state or local issues. Whether the commissioners who govern your city are Republicans or Democrats makes no slightest difference; managing the affairs of a city is a business. Efficient management is what you want, not a certain point of view on the tariff or American's foreign policy. The cry of "party loyalty" is simply a red herring across the trail. Yet so suggestible is the human mind that a voter who is a Republican in national politics will be strongly pulled toward voting for a candidate who is put up as a Republican for municipal office, especially if the two elections are simultaneous, or are so close together that the mental attitude engendered by the one carries over into the other.

The third help to intelligent voting will be to provide every voter with *impartial information concerning the candidates* among whom he is to choose. Newspaper publicity, campaign speeches, and corner-store discussions play up prejudices and disseminate misinformation. What we want is the facts. A leaflet could be sent by a governmental agency, or by a non-partisan Good Government Association, or by a state university, to every voter a few weeks before each election. This leaflet would contain (a) an accurate

statement of the past *experience* of each candidate: his record at the educational institutions he has attended, the vocation or vocations he has followed, with specific details, the offices of trust, including public office, which he has held, the books which he has published, the organizations of which he is a member, the honours which he has received; it would be excellent if the result of standard mental tests given in the schools were to be included. (b) An accurate statement of his *record* in public office: what bills he voted for and against, what bills he spoke for and against, what bills he himself brought forward; and any other indisputable and relevant facts. (c) A statement in his own words of *what he stands for.* This would have to be taken with many grains of salt. But it would be very useful. We must know not only what a candidate has done, but what he proposes to do. And the degree of correlation between promise and performance will be valuable information if the candidate seeks office again, at some future election.

So much to make it easier for the citizen to vote intelligently. And now, *secondly, we must make the vote of each citizen count.* Here what we need is preferential voting and proportional representation. At present, this is the situation: If you belong to a minority party, you feel that your vote is thrown away; only where two parties are nearly even in strength is there any value to your vote. If there are more than two candidates for a given office, there is the considerable likelihood that the strongest party-machine, which is solidly behind *its* candidate, will so split the opposition that its candidate will be elected even if unacceptable to a majority of the voters. The decision as to what candidates you can vote for is made at the primaries; and it is futile to expect

the average citizen to attend primaries as well as final elections. . . . In short, everything is weighted, in the system of voting still well-nigh universal in this country, in favour of the dominant party-machine.

Preferential voting eliminates primaries and settles whatever is up for decision at a single election. Whoever is elected has behind him, if not the first choice, at least the second or third choice, of a majority of the voters. Your vote need not be thrown away; if you cannot secure the election of the candidate whom you most want, you can at least help decide which of the other candidates is to be chosen. There is nothing complicated about preferential voting; it simply involves marking numerals, 1, 2, 3 (and 4, 5, 6, etc., if you choose, and there are as many candidates as that) before the names of the candidates for a given office, to express the order of your preference. Voting-machines make the counting easy. There is much less expense and less time consumed than by our usual system of double elections.

Preferential voting makes *proportional representation* possible. The unfair gerrymander is done away with entirely; and each party receives the same proportion of seats in the representative body that that party's vote bears to the total vote cast. An example or two will show the difference between this and our present system.

> In 1912 the Democratic party in New York City, polling 48 per cent of the vote, elected *all* the state senators elected from the city, instead of half, or one less than half. Outside the city, 26 out of 27 senators elected were Republicans, though proportional representation would have given them 16 and the Democrats 10. In this case, the Republicans in New York City had *no* senator to represent them, while the upstate Democrats

had only one, instead of the ten to which their votes entitled them.

In Birmingham, England, at a parliamentary election in 1922, the Conservatives won all eleven seats, with some 149,000 votes; the Labour party, with 76,000 votes, and the Liberal party, with 29,000 votes, got *no* seats.

In the United States Congressional election of 1918, the result led to the following composition of the House of Representatives: 235 Republicans, 194 Democrats, one Socialist. If representatives had been elected in proportion to votes cast, the Democrats would have had 231 seats, the Republicans 193 seats, and the Socialists 6. Wilson's failure to get support from Congress for his international policy was not due to a mandate from the people, it was due to our unjust system of elections.

One current system is manifestly unjust, always, except by a happy chance, failing to reflect the actual proportions of public opinion. But, even worse than that, it is profoundly discouraging to all those who, in a given community, belong to a minority party. They are simply counted out. No wonder they are apathetic about politics and often do not take the trouble to vote. . . . Proportional representation has been incorporated in the constitutions of the new European democracies. It will, no doubt, be adopted here in time.

In the third place, we must put into operation forces that will secure more trained experts, and fewer ignorant but docile party men, for public office. Here there are two great reforms that must be pushed, the extension of Civil Service examinations, and the use of the principle of delegated government.

The principle of the *Civil Service* is that men should be

trained for their specific jobs, and should prove their training and their ability by passing with high credit specific examinations. Only men who have thus demonstrated their ability and their training should be put up for election, or appointed to any office. *Every* public office should come under this principle. This does not mean that the man must be chosen for mayor (city manager) or senator who stands *highest* on the list; but he must be chosen from among those who have done well on the examinations. If he has not had the training, or has not the mental ability, to pass such examinations, he is not fit for the office. . . . What a splendid weeding out of senators and aldermen and mayors we should have!

Incidentally, politicians could no longer distribute offices in reward for party service. A large part of their hold upon office would thus be gone. There would no longer be an overturn of great numbers of minor office-holders after an election which brought a new party into power. All the routine officials would have life-careers, and could be dismissed only for cause. Efficiency in politics would gain enormously and a great saving of public moneys would be effected. . . . This plan is accepted in principle, in our country, and only needs further extension.

The principle of *Delegated Government* should also be extended. According to this principle, the voters elect a Commission, a Governor, a President—a single person or a small committee. These elected officials are then responsible for appointing (from the Civil Service list) the officials who are to do the work of administration. The voters cannot properly judge of the qualifications of candidates for numerous administrative offices. But they *can* vote for some one person, or for a small commission, who will assume

responsibility for appointing the best men or women available for carrying on the various sorts of work that have to be done. The principle of Delegated Government thus works hand in hand with the Short Ballot. . . . The best-known use of the principle is in the City Manager plan. Here the voters elect a City Commission—men of prominence, often, because they do not have to give up their own vocations. This Commission scours the field to find the best available man, or woman, to manage the city's affairs. *They* do not try to do it, they have not the training and experience. But they find a trained man, watch him, and dismiss him if he does not, in their judgment, "make good." . . . The principle is also illustrated in the President's Cabinet. We are not asked to vote for Attorney General, Secretary of State, and the rest. We elect a President, and put upon him the responsibility of appointing the men who are to take charge of these various departments of the Government's work. The principle is illustrated again in the Tariff Commission, composed not of elected but of appointed experts.

All these reforms are bitterly opposed by the profiteering politicians. Yet for them, or for something of the sort, we must work, if we wish to see politics carried on not for the fattening of the insiders' pocketbooks but for the common good. The state of political morality in the United States is a public scandal. If such measures as the foregoing fail to cure the evils, we shall be forced to more drastic measures; we shall have to limit sharply those accumulations of private and corporate wealth from which the funds for "corruption" mainly come.

CHAPTER XII

SELFISH BUSINESS

When May Business Be Called Selfish?

We do not commonly speak of "corruption," or even of "graft," in business. Yet business in America, as in most countries, is carried on quite frankly and universally for private profit, rather than with an eye to the common good. The difference is that in commerce and industry the principle of individualism, of every man for himself, to increase his personal profits in every way possible within the law, is so completely established, and the ideal of business as a form of public service so generally regarded as utopian, that the politician is frowned upon for his side of the very transactions for which the other side, the business man's side, is held blameless. *Of course* the corporation must provide a fund to influence legislation in its favor; that is a part of its "legitimate" expenses. But the politicians who manipulate the legislation are "corrupt"! In short, in spite of high-sounding maxims of Chambers of Commerce and Rotary Clubs, there is less actual disinterestedness in business than in politics. And the harm done to the public welfare by selfish politics is a minor matter compared with the harm done by selfish business.

The plain fact is that the selfishness and stupidity of private business wastes billions of dollars worth of the national wealth while politics is wasting its millions. Indeed,

as the more important part of the graft in politics is a mere by-product of profit-seeking business, we may well consider whether it is not our industrial system rather than our political system which is most in need of reform. The recent currency of the word "profiteering" is a sign that even the upper classes are becoming uneasy over the morals of business *where it is conspicuously successful.* But the ethics of the profiteers is not different from the ethics of business in general; they have simply had the skill, or luck, to do what practically all business men are trying and hoping to do—make a lot of money. How many business men whom you know are sacrificing opportunities to make money out of consideration for the happiness of their employees, or of their business rivals, or of their customers, or of posterity? Some, thank God! For selfishness is not the only motive that actuates human beings. But "success" in business means to us making money. And the desire for success, for the money itself, and the power and pleasure which money can give, is so powerful that it is foolish to expect most men to renounce these things so long as they can get them without punishment, or censure from their fellows. It may be even harmful to set up idealistic codes for business men, while the laws permit anti-social practices. For these fine phrases, rehearsed in after-dinner speeches, and accepted with much self-approval, mask from those who give them lip-worship the fact that the actual conduct of their business is actuated by quite other motives, that they are really in business for their pocketbooks.

"Profiteering," at its peaks, has reached astonishing heights. According to Senate Document No. 259, the earnings of bituminous and lignite coal companies in 1917 averaged around 100% profit on their capital stock. Rela-

tively few companies got less than 25%, eleven companies got over 1000%, four companies got over 2000%, i.e., profits amounting to more than twenty times the value of their capital stock, in that one year alone. . . . The war-years gave opportunities for the diverting of a hitherto unprecedented proportion of the world's income to the pockets of the owners of strategically placed industries. The United States Steel Corporation, which was doing excellently in 1914 with $23,000,000 in profits, yielded its owners in 1917 $450,000,000 in profits. The Baldwin Locomotive Company jumped from $350,000 to around $6,000,000 of profits. . . . And so on. . . . It was estimated by careful investigators that the *increased* profits of the corporations of the country amounted to over four billion dollars a year. This means net profits, and did not include the money put back into the business. And these profits resulted only in minor degree from increased production; they resulted primarily from increased *demand,* which permitted the charging of higher prices. . . . Much of this profiteering was in foodstuffs, wearing-apparel, and other necessities of life; so that the higher prices charged directly increased the cost of living for every one. Of course, indirectly, all profits taken by any one raise by so much the cost of living for the rest of us. And the question is, *how much* of a tax are we willing to pay that the owners of industries and commercial concerns may make more money?

Since the War, profits have not been so spectacular. But a new pace was set, new hopes of profit aroused; and the cry "Hands off business," "Return to normalcy," reflected the eagerness of the "capitalist" class to be free again from the restraints and high taxes which had begun to be imposed. In 1920, we remember that the price of sugar shot up from

eight cents a pound to twenty-five cents and more. The sugar-profiteers are said to have made six hundred million dollars in a single year—which amounts to a tax of thirty dollars on every family in the United States. . . . A national bank has just announced that its dividends for the past eighty years have averaged 100% a year. . . . Senator Capper has reported that the consumers are paying fifteen billion dollars more for farm products than the farmers receive. Most of the farmers, indeed, are barely making a living. In ten years the price received by farmers for their wheat rose about 25%; the price of bread rose nearly 100%. A New York baking company has been making over 100% profit in a year. . . . The *Railway Age* reported that when Texas farmers were selling spinach at $5 a ton, Chicago consumers were paying for it fifteen cents a pound, which is $300 a ton. *Some one* was making money!

Mr. Stuart Chase has collected multitudes of facts like the following: Writing inks sell for about $1.25 a quart. The Government Printing Office is able to make its own ink at nine cents a quart. . . . A certain liquid soap is sold at a dollar a gallon; the Chicago Y. M. C. A. makes, for its own use, a better grade for eleven cents a gallon. . . . A certain disinfecting spray was marketed under a brand name for $62 a barrel. When its composition was made known, the price dropped to 47 cents a barrel. . . . And so on. The price which we are paying for the necessities and comforts of life is, in a good many cases, 50% or 100% more than the sum for which these articles could be profitably sold.

The supposed effect of free competition in keeping prices down has ceased to exist in many industries. Price-fixing combinations have run up prices; and even where there is no open collusion, a tacit agreement has maintained a new

scale of profits. Not in every field. There are commodities in which, for one reason or other, profiteering has not yet succeeded, and whose price (taking into account the value of money) is lower than before the War. But the accepted principle is to charge "what the traffic will bear," without regard to what would be a "fair" return for capital and management.

The degree of profiteering current goes far beyond the profits declared upon Income Tax blanks, or the cash dividends paid upon capital stock. Large salaries paid to the insiders consume a considerable share of what is really profits; the American Metal Co., for example, was recently paying about a million dollars a year in salaries to six officers. Many such instances could be given. . . . Profits are often veiled by declaring stock dividends; this permits a really very high percentage of profit to be disguised as a normal dividend upon the greatly enlarged amount of stock. Thus a great deal of the "capital stock" of the more prosperous concerns is nothing but "water," representing no money invested. If lean years come, the investors complain bitterly that they are not receiving a proper return for their money. But the insiders, who foresaw the decline in earnings, probably sold their interest to unsuspecting investors before the decline had gone far. And the stock which has ceased to pay is mostly "water," with no real claim upon society for paying dividends.

The number of people who, when skill and fortune combine to favour them, are in a position to make large profits, either by owning and running a business, or by holding stock in prosperous concerns bought before their prosperity brought up the price of the stock, is considerable. Including those who have hopes of sharing in such profits, a majority

of the people who count, that is, who influence public opinion and legislation, come within this class. These people naturally favour unlimited opportunities for profit-making. But they are only a small fraction of the people in the United States. The question is, Is it just that the rest of the people —the millions of employees in business and government, the farmers, the teachers and ministers and other people who have only their salaries to live on, should have their cost of living raised very appreciably in order that certain business men and stockholders may get rich?

What Harm Is Being Done to Employees?

Suppose we lay aside the difficult question as to the point at which profit-making becomes in itself unfair to the rest of the community (becomes "profiteering"), and ask *how* these profits are made, and whether the methods of making them are anti-social. In what ways do our money-makers hurt others in their race to make their fortunes?

Well, in the first place, they very commonly hurt their employees; by underpaying them, by failing to remedy dangerous and unsanitary conditions of work, by throwing them out of employment unnecessarily, by hiring children who ought to be in school, and in other ways.

As to the matter of wages, we will merely say that some classes of workers are overpaid, while other groups are scandalously underpaid, depending largely upon the effectiveness with which the different groups are organized. Obviously it is to the immediate financial advantage of employers to pay as little as possible for labour. There have been many heart-breaking cases of owners of industries paying starvation wages at the same time that they were raking off tremendous profits. The situation varies, of

course, from industry to industry, from place to place, and from year to year. At present the labouring class in this country is, on the whole, better paid than anywhere else, or than ever before in the history of the world. But we can not be sure that this relatively fortunate condition will endure. And there are even now many groups of workers who are not getting enough, by the hardest work, to maintain a decent standard of living. *Some* of the profits of business are being made by sweating employees.

Some of the profits are being made at the cost of the health, and even of the lives, of employees. Safety devices, sanitary conditions, cost money; and many of our most prosperous concerns refuse to spend any more than our often very lax laws require for the protection of their workers. Authorities agree that three-quarters of the deaths and serious injuries in American industry could be prevented if the manufacturers so desired, by the use of available methods. Our record in this respect is much worse than that of the civilized countries of Europe.

It is extraordinary how the urge toward profits blinds ordinary respectable people, who think of themselves as "good," and even as "Christian," to the misery which their selfishness entails. For one example: The U. S. Census mortality statistics recently showed that the death rate from tuberculosis among cotton mill operatives is higher than for all other workers; there is also a very high percentage of deaths from other diseases, owing to conditions of work in the mills, which are to a large extent remediable by the expenditure of capital. But the National Industrial Conference Board, composed of representatives of the American Cotton Manufacturers' Association and of other trades, stirred by protests to investigate this situation, issued a

report which whitewashed the cotton manufacturers. They announced the complacent conclusion that "apparently there is no conclusive information as to the health hazards to which cotton mill operators are exposed." . . . And conditions continue as before.

Sometimes the profits of business are increased by shutting down plants and stopping production, that prices may be kept high. That this involves unemployment and an absolute cessation of income for the employees is of no interest to business men who are out to make money. They talk about "over-production," and lay the blame upon "economic laws." But there is no real over-production while there are still millions of people in our country (not to speak of the people of other countries) who are undernourished, underclothed, without decent living quarters or the minimum comforts that our productive capacity could give every family. "Over-production" merely means that the manufacturers expect to make more money by selling fewer goods at a higher price. That they have any responsibility for the happiness of their employees does not enter their heads. The American Woolen Company in a recent year made a 100% profit upon its capital. In the following year it closed some of its mills and operated others on part time, because the price of woollen goods was falling. The owners had already got back all their money invested, several times over. They naturally wanted more. Meanwhile their former employees walked the streets desperately seeking work, the death rate of their children rapidly rose. And thousands of children were staying at home from school because they lacked clothing, which their parents could not afford to buy.

Sometimes children can find work when parents can not, because they will work for very low wages. The 1920 Census

reported over a million children under fourteen years of age as "gainfully employed." And this did not include children in street-trades, in industrial home-work, or in agriculture. A conservative business journal recently estimated the total number of working children at two and a half million. Relatively few of our States give even the protection of an eight-hour day to their working children; and tens of thousands of children are at work for nine and ten hours a day.

There is no need of argument to support the assertion that children should have their time for schooling and outdoor play. It actually *pays* the country as a whole, that they should wait and enter industry later. "For every dollar earned by a child under fourteen, tenfold will be taken from its earning capacity in later years." It would pay the State to *support* these children, giving them their schooling and their playtime, rather than let them stunt their physical and mental growth, impair their vitality, and run the risk of incurring one of the numerous diseases to which child-workers are peculiarly prone. Two or three times as many children as adults are killed or injured in industry, in proportion to the number employed. In Massachusetts in a single recent year twenty thousand children were killed or injured in industrial accidents. The harm done to health, to the minds and morals of the children, by this premature confinement, is beyond computation.

It is not meant that children should do no work at all, but that they should do no work which interferes with their schooling and playtime, which checks their growth, or subjects them to health-risks.

But manufacturers, mine-owners, business men, so successfully influence public opinion and legislation that three

efforts to control child labour through Federal legislation have proved abortive, and few of the States have been able to pass even fairly adequate laws. Where good laws have been passed, they are often very poorly enforced. . . . The health, the happiness, the education, the very lives of children (not their own children, but other people's children) are of so little importance in the eyes of those who have a chance to make *profits!*

Few people are consciously cruel. Few are aimlessly cruel. They are led into cruelty because by means of it they can make money. They do not realize the cruelty, because it is the nature of men to idealize their conduct, and to overlook the unhappiness which it causes. And besides, they are caught in a system which they do not see how to change. But looking at our economic order impartially, we see that it does tend, in the nature of the case, to be hard upon the working classes. Hence come strikes, class-strife, socialism, and radical movements of all sorts. . . . On the whole, we gain ground. But only by the hardest sort of effort. And —are we gaining ground fast enough?

What Harm Is Being Done to the Public?

Any unnecessary expense in production or distribution is taking so much out of the consumers' pockets. Our money-seeking scramble involves so much waste of effort that the average price of goods is probably at least doubled. In this way the public suffers.

Consider the waste of money and labour in competitive advertising. Each firm with something to sell hopes to get a larger share of business away from its rivals. In some cases more money is spent in the effort to persuade people to buy this or that brand of soap or toothpaste or automo-

bile than it costs to produce the finished article. Mr. Edward Bok, in a recent number of *The Atlantic Monthly,* estimated the total annual outlay for advertising in the United States as $1,284,000,000. Directly or indirectly, the labour power of 600,000 workers is expended, in this struggle of one concern against another, to induce the consumers to buy its goods rather than some one else's. More than half of the output of our printing presses is advertising matter. Of the 2,600,000 tons of newsprint pulp consumed annually in this country, more than 1,500,000 tons is used for advertising. And three-quarters of all the matter that goes through the mails is advertising.

Instead of buying our goods according to standard specifications, we buy them for the most part from those who shout the loudest and the most persuasively, with no guaranty that we are getting our money's worth. For the most part we *aren't.* The goods most advertised as superior are often actually inferior to goods less advertised and sold at a lower price. The great bulk of advertising is sheer waste of money, man-power, and the consumer's time. A very little advertising of new and improved products, to call them to the attention of consumers, notices of the current productions at theatres and other places of entertainment, of price reductions (if these are *bona fide*), and other useful information, would be for the benefit of the public. The rest of our colossal advertising activity is the product of our selfish individualism in business, everybody trying to grab the biggest share of the consumers' money, and wasting half of it in the process.

Nor does the harm consist merely in the waste of labour and money. Consumers are persuaded to buy inferior goods, often adulterated or shoddy goods. Chase and Schlinck's

Your Money's Worth, published in 1927, is full of concrete contemporary examples of the misrepresentation in advertising. Space permits only one short quotation:

> We believe that the foregoing evidence indicates only too clearly that there are significant groups of products, if not whole industries, in which the production of sound goods, accurately described, and sold at a fair price, has not been the dominating motive of those in control of the process. We have seen that in the case of refrigerators, lamps, soap and cleaning agents, textiles, furs, weighing scales, paints, heating and cooking devices, varnishes, even loaves of bread [and many other products], there exists an enormous burden of adulteration, bad workmanship, misrepresentation, sharp practice, and even downright bodily danger, which falls back upon the consumer.

Next, consider the waste in competitive business through duplication of plant, of clerks and salesmen, delivery wagons, and so on. The tens of thousands of "drummers," who spend their time trying to persuade the consumers to buy *their* goods rather than their rivals', simply add their salaries and expense-accounts to the cost of the goods, without benefiting the public. . . . In many fields there are twice as many factories, mills, mines, shops as are necessary to meet the public's needs. Newcomers are continually breaking into industries which already have sufficient plant to meet all the demand. The result is, of course, economic waste, however the newcomer may profit. The waste lies not merely in the partial idleness of plants and clerks, and the unnecessary financial outlay, but in the business failures, of which some fifteen or twenty thousand are reported in an average year.

Let the milk business suffice for an example. An investigation made a few years ago in Washington, D. C., showed that sixty-five dealers supplied the city with duplicate storage, pasteurizing, cooling, and delivery plants. On one city block seventeen milk waggons were counted, serving an average of two or three customers apiece on that block. The result was that the cost of *distributing* milk, including the profits of the various dealers, approximately equalled the cost of *producing* the milk and getting it into the hands of the dealers. . . . Similarly, in New York City a committee of the State legislature stated that "under present conditions it takes almost as many men to bring the dairyman's milk to the consumer as there are dairymen engaged in the production of milk, with all their employees. This is the result of the purely competitive basis upon which the business is handled." Incidentally, this committee found such facts as this: one dealer had expended nearly $200,000 in a single year to stifle competition. Meanwhile the price of milk remained high, and babies of the poor died for lack of it.

Another source of waste in our individualistic industrial order lies in the needless diversification of styles, types, and sizes. The Chamber of Commerce of the United States has estimated that the labour power of some five million people is thus wasted, and the cost of living raised some twenty-five per cent. . . . Still another source of waste lies in the pocketing of ideas, trade secrets, inventions, which are used for the private advantage of the owner, not for the good of the industry as a whole. The most efficient factories, mills, shops are often as much as two or three, sometimes as much as four or five, times as efficient as the less efficient. If the most efficient machines, methods, practices, were to be uti-

lized by all, production could be more than doubled. A large part of the failure to use better methods is due, of course, merely to human stupidity. But no effort, naturally, is made by the more efficient producers or distributors to educate their less efficient rivals. On the contrary, many machines are held for the exclusive use of the owners of the patents, many secrets are jealously guarded, that the possessor may make higher profits than his rivals.

An incidental harm done by selfish business is the defiling of our cities by smoke. Most of the smoke which comes from chimneys of factories, heating-plants, etc., is unnecessary, could be prevented by proper devices and proper stoking. It is extremely wasteful. Experts of the University of Pittsburgh, after an exhaustive investigation, stated that in the Pittsburgh district alone four million dollars' worth of coal was being wasted annually in smoke. All sorts of valuable chemicals could be recovered from this waste product. In addition, the loss to the city and its people was continuous and serious. Metals must be painted twice as often in Pittsburgh as in a smoke-free city, and replaced after half the period of time. Stone buildings are disintegrated by smoke. The cost of keeping buildings clean, inside and out, is greatly increased. Collars and shirts must be washed twice as often. Lights must be turned on earlier in the evening. Altogether, it was estimated that the citizens of Pittsburgh were losing ten million dollars a year because of smoke, and the people of the United States some five hundred millions. The cost in health is beyond computation. Smoke shuts off sunshine, irritates the membranes of the eyes, nose, throat, and lungs, and thus causes or aggravates all sorts of diseases. The chances of life are, other things equal, appreciably less in smoky than in smoke-free

cities. . . . But what do the factory-owners care, so long as they are making good profits?

Perhaps the most flagrant cases of selfishness are the cases where valuable goods have been *destroyed,* for fear that they would glut the market and lower prices so far that profits would fall. High profits come when goods on the market are scarce. Storable goods, like hides, or sugar, may simply be hoarded in quantity—as was done a few years ago when prices of these commodities were boosted to unprecedented heights. But perishable commodities must be put on the market or destroyed. So, a few years ago, shiploads of bananas, brought to the port of New York, were dumped overboard in the Bay, when it was figured that if they were put on the market, the lowered prices for the larger stock would bring lower profits than a higher price for a smaller stock. Meanwhile thousands of poor people in New York City were hungry and undernourished. So, in 1917, when there was a world-shortage of food, potato speculators allowed a part of the potato-crop which they had bought up to rot in the ground, that they might make more money by high prices.

There is another result of selfish business even more serious, in the long run, than any of which we have spoken—the waste of natural resources, which will raise the cost of living for future generations, and perhaps bring the most serious dearth of needed materials. Our oil-supplies are being rapidly squandered, in the most reckless way, scarcely more than ten per cent of the oil available being saved (according to some estimates), the rest being wasted in the scramble for quick profits. What our citizens will do for oil twenty or thirty years from now, and for all the rest of time, no one knows. But in our optimism we trust they

will find some substitute; and in our selfishness we do not care. . . . What is true of oil is true of coal and lumber, though not with so startling a percentage of waste. The coal will last some generations yet, and the lumber can be replaced, in time. . . . Meanwhile, the water-power which could be used to save our oil and coal from rapid exhaustion is hardly being tapped. There is more *money,* just now, to be got in oil and coal. "What has posterity done for us, that we should do anything for posterity?"

Our industrial system has much to say for itself. It has called forth a vast deal of energy and inventiveness, it has taught men (in a measure) to co-operate, it has brought into general use a code of honesty (in certain respects), punctuality, orderliness, and steady working-habits. Above all, it is a "going concern"; it works! Any attempt to make sudden and sweeping changes in it would be certain to lead to more or less upset, confusion, and waste of energy in conflict. Using the spectacular development of science and invention of recent decades, and tapping the hitherto unused stores of power latent in coal and oil, it has brought about such a rapid increase of wealth that its shocking wastefulness and selfishness are easily overlooked. So long as it can keep on increasing in efficiency and raising the general standard of living, and so long as it continues to give opportunity to able youths of all classes to get into the game and make their pile, so long it can afford to disregard the grumbling of the "under dogs," the warnings of the relatively few intelligent critics, and the menacing portent of Bolshevism in Russia.

There is no space in this volume to discuss the ideals of the Bolshevists, even if the present writer were competent to do so. But what is clear is, that they came to consider

the evils in the "capitalistic" system intolerable. It is of great importance that we should get away from the blind complacency now so dominant, and see these evils as they are, in all their horridness, that we may mend our ways before an ebb in the tide of prosperity brings them into relief as the causes of poverty and misery. . . . But quite apart from the possible future danger of radical or revolutionary movements, we must try, if we love our country, and are zealous for its fair name, if we care for the happiness of our fellows, and of our descendants, so to temper our economic system that it will serve the interests of all, rather than the interests of the few, of coming generations rather than merely of present owners, that it will foster a co-operative spirit rather than that dollar-getting spirit which is, alas! the emblem of American business in the minds of men all over the world.

CHAPTER XIII

PRIVILEGE

Is Our Present Distribution of Wealth Tolerable?

No other nation has such concentration of wealth in the hands of a relatively small class as has ours. A recent investigation [1] finds that a tenth of our people own over 95% of the income-yielding property in the United States. A few years ago the United States Industrial Commission estimated that 2% of our population own 60% of the entire national wealth. At the other end of the scale, 65% of the people own but 5% of the wealth of the country. Some two hundred individuals have annual incomes of over a million dollars apiece; several of these run up to the neighbourhood of a fifty million dollar income. Meantime, in 1920 the average earnings of all manual workers were around $1000 a year; and a good many *families* were getting an annual income of under $600 a year.

If the national income were evenly distributed, it would not suffice to give everybody enough to maintain a comfortable scale of living. (And this in the most efficient and prosperous country in the world. Does this not show how terribly important it is that business should be conducted with an eye to maximum production rather than with an eye to personal profits?) What actually happens is, that (according to one estimate) one per cent of the people get about a quarter of the national income. Another estimate

[1] Summarized by Lewis Corey, in the *New Republic*, Aug. 10, 1927.

(by the National Bureau of Economic Research) has it that 5% of the families in America get 30% of the national income. Whatever estimate is correct, the general situation is clear enough. Some hundreds of thousands of people have much more than they need, a few millions more have a very comfortable subsistence, the bulk of the people "get along," while the poorest quarter of the population are undernourished, underclothed, and inadequately housed.

In the course of the Interchurch Report of 1920, we read, "It is certain that at least one-third and possibly one-half of the families of wage-earners employed in manufacturing and mining earn in the course of the year less than enough to support them in anything like a comfortable and decent condition." Whoever is inclined to boast of our national prosperity should be required to live for a month or so under the conditions in which the "submerged tenth" have to live. Halls are dark, even many living and sleeping-rooms so dark that gaslight has to be burned all day, with nothing but an airshaft for ventilation; no privacy, no quiet; perpetual noise, perpetual odours; half a dozen or more people sleeping in a room; one toilet for several families; stairs to climb to get water, or to dispose of garbage. Our "slums," which are by no means confined to our big cities, are a national disgrace. But if business is to make its fat profits, if landlords are to make ten per cent in rent, if stockholders and bondholders and real-estate speculators are to get their rake-off, wages must be low, rents must be high, and the poor must live where they can.

It is important to note that inequality in income is becoming greater rather than less. The number of million-dollar incomes in 1921 was 21, in 1922 was 67, in 1923 was 97, in 1924 was 75, in 1926 was 207. In 1921 the *share* of the

national income going to people with net incomes of $5,000 and up was 10.1%, in 1924 it was 17.7%; figures for later years were not available at date of writing this chapter, but are likely to show a still greater share going to the well-to-do.

Is this extreme inequality in the distribution of wealth and income permanently tolerable? No one with any social conscience thinks so. Here are some representative contemporary statements:

> [Our present system involves] the seizure of a large portion of the fruits of individual and social productive energies, required for the full support and further stimulation of these energies and for the wider human life which they are designed to serve, and their assignment to persons who have not helped to make them, do not need them, and cannot use them.[2]

> It needs no Christ to convince anybody today that our system of distribution is wildly and monstrously wrong. We have million-dollar babies side by side with paupers worn out by a long life of unremitting drudgery. . . . The need for a drastic redistribution of income in all civilized countries is now as obvious and as generally admitted as the need for sanitation. . . . Class stratification of income is all wrong. We all have the same human needs for money to serve.[3]

> The Church should teach that as long as any person is selfishly opposing, or through indifference preventing, such readjustments in our social and economic system as will remove from all men the burden and the threat of poverty, he is a sinner unrepentant, a violator of the fundamental law of God.[4]

[2] J. A. Hobson, *Work and Wealth*, p. 186.
[3] Bernard Shaw, Preface to *Androcles and the Lion*.
[4] Bernard Iddings Bell, *Right and Wrong after the War*, p. 37.

Apart from the fundamental injustice of our system of distribution, it is obvious that the spending of a thousand dollars by a rich family does not relieve human suffering and produce positive happiness to the extent that the spending of that thousand dollars by a poor family would do. Moreover, we must remember that poverty is not merely a source of immediate misery for the poor, but the source of many evils that affect the whole community. Poverty leads to ill-health and premature death, thus depriving the community of the man-power it might have had; it leads to pauperism, professional prostitution, and crime. It prevents boys and girls from getting the education which would make them skilled workers and valuable citizens. It often leads to the waste and pity of child-labour. . . . Meanwhile some tens of thousands of rich people squander large sums of money in needless luxury and ostentation, drafting human labour from needed work to the gratification of their senses, and warping the standards of the moderately circumstanced, to spend more than they can afford to spend, in this contagious display of fine clothes, and all the other signs of affluence.

We have already noted that concentration of wealth means concentration of *power*. Private and corporate wealth is the source of the "corruption" of politics and of the press, and makes possible what is called "plutocracy." It makes possible also an idle leisure-class that lives on other men's labour. We have as yet relatively few men who are shameless enough to be mere social parasites, but we have thousands of society women whose existence from childhood has been sheer parasitism. . . . To note the economic and political effects of our topheavy distribution of wealth would take us too far. Economists tell us, for example, that the

lack of purchasing power among the poor leads to an accumulation of commodities which is called "overproduction"; this leads to unemployment, still lower purchasing power, and so on, in a vicious circle. Moreover, it often leads to a frantic rivalry among manufacturers to sell in foreign markets, and hence, not infrequently, to imperialism and war. . . . Certainly our very uneven distribution of wealth leads to restlessness among the poor, to class-strife, and to a rift between classes which seriously impairs our sense of *community.*

What Can Be Said for Our Existing Inequalities?

To resent criticism is a universal human trait; and those who profit by the present scheme of things naturally rush to its defence. The easiest retort to any expression of dissatisfaction with the existing distribution of wealth is to brand it as Bolshevism. But this imputation of Bolshevism is a mere smoke-screen, an irrelevant diversion of attention from the discussion of the evils in our present order. We are not suggesting, and no one of importance suggests, the discarding of our elaborately organized social order, to cure its evils. On the other hand, every one knows that we have not yet attained the millennium. There *are* evils in our system, as it has developed; and the true patriot will be zealous to cure them.

The root of the defence of the right to accumulate unlimited fortunes lies in the assertion that such opportunity is necessary to stimulate ambition and provide incentive for hard work. The stories of "self-made" men have had great effect in stimulating the imaginations of the young. And though the golden opportunities of pioneer days have passed, there are still striking cases of men of energy and acquisitive

ability lifting themselves from obscurity to affluence. The driving power of their ambition for success and fortune has set the pace of American industry. Rivals have been put on their mettle, employees have had to "make good" or lose their jobs. Can we dispense with this selfish but powerful motive? And would not any attempt to interfere with the accumulation of private fortunes be intolerable tyranny? Is it not precisely the hope of making a fortune that has lured the great majority of immigrants to our shores? Shall we paralyze their energies by putting limits to this hope?

Well, it is in any case a question of *degree* of limitation. We are committed to the principle of income taxes, on a sliding scale which takes a larger percentage of the larger incomes. We have inheritance taxes. We have state regulation of prices (and therefore profits) in the case of the railroads and other public utilities. We have the post office conducted as a public service, without profiteering; no one can make a fortune by raising the rate of postage by half a cent. We have minimum wage laws and many other laws restricting the right of business men and corporations to make money at the expense of their employees. We still have state ownership of water power, reserving to the public treasury the excess profits which may be available from that source. In short, we are employing already all the principles necessary to restrain the growth of private fortunes. It is simply a question of the degree to which we wish to apply them.

Our question then is, How *great* a financial prize must we dangle as bait before our business men to induce them to work hard, to choose their executives wisely, to keep their employees working hard in the fear of discharge? May we not suggest that the efficiency of such bait is largely relative?

In a society which permits (to a very few) the winning of a million a year, ambitious youths will strain towards that goal. If fifty thousand a year were the maximum attainable, our youths would be as eager to reach that goal. . . . And do we not overestimate the importance of the financial side of ambition? Men want *success,* for its own sake; they want power, they want positions of eminence, they want to overcome obstacles and win their way. They want the consciousness of having done well. They want, or can by proper education be made to want, to serve their generation, and be gratefully honoured while they live and after they are gone. If we were to extend the principles now in operation to the point of making impossible the accumulation of fortunes on anything like the scale of our modern multi-millionaires, it is very doubtful if we should destroy any desirable ambition. We should be greatly reducing the temptation to the anti-social practices we reviewed in the chapter preceding this. And we should have diverted a great fund from the pockets of the profiteers for the greater reward of the rest of the workers, or for the public treasury.

We must remember that relatively *few* people are stimulated by our present opportunities for fortune-making. The great mass of people are on salary, or working for a weekly wage, and have no hopes of anything else. *They* would be more stimulated to extra effort if the excess profits of the business were to be distributed in the form of bonuses or profit-sharing, instead of flowing into the pockets of the owner, or of absentee stockholders. . . . Unskilled labourers are very apt to shirk, because they are unskilled; they have no interest in their work (which is usually monotonous and hard), no hope for anything but their weekly wage. But

whenever men are *trained,* they will take interest in their work. Give them, in addition, opportunity for advancement to positions of responsibility and power, and you do not need to offer great financial rewards. Teachers and college professors, and other trained men and women on fixed salaries, are among our hardest workers; and from such people, who have no expectation of getting rich, come many of our new ideas and inventions.

Would it not be wiser, instead of inflaming our youth with get-rich-quick ideals, to spread the conception of working together for the common good? We have vast stores of patriotic emotion which might be tapped to this end, instead of running wild in "100% American" jingoism and radical-baiting. We have vast stores of religious emotion which might be tapped for a working ideal of the brotherhood of man, instead of running wild in anti-evolution campaigns, primitive revivalistic orgies, and ascetic Puritanism. Have we not needlessly lowered our morale, and made ourselves a spectacle in the eyes of the nations, by our mad race for making "tons of money"? Human nature is not necessarily as bad as we are *making* it by putting these glittering cash prizes before the eyes of our youth. Is not one very sound argument against our present individualistic scramble the fact that it is debasing men's souls? The great epochs in the world's history have been the epochs of *civic* virtue, the periods when men have lived not primarily for their private interests, but with their hearts bound up with the welfare of the *community.* If our churches, our schools, our press, our Chambers of Commerce, our Rotary Clubs, together with the American Legion, the Junior Leagues, and the like, were to keep before the eyes of our youth the ideal of an efficient business as one in which the employees were well paid and

protected, by which the public was well served with honest goods at a low price, and in which waste was reduced to a minimum, we could dispense with the incentive of the fortune-hunting gamble.

It is sometimes said that any plan which distributes wealth more evenly will simply encourage the poorer people to have more children; that we shall thus accentuate the present selective breeding of the race from the less fit, without making the poor really any better off. . . . But actually, the poor are not deterred by poverty from having children. Experience shows, on the contrary, that raising wages tends to bring a consciousness of greater wants, to raise the standard of living, and, presently, to reduce the birth rate. The population problem is indeed serious; birth control should be practised far more than at present by those who have little to give children in the way of inherited brains and opportunities for cultural development. But raising the poor to the level of decent subsistence, while not increasing their birth rate, *will* give them better opportunity to give decent upbringing and education to the children they do have. . . . Moreover, the slicing off of the needless accumulations of the rich would enable the State to do far more than at present in the way of providing opportunities of education, health, and recreation for these opportunityless children.

There remains one argument deserving of serious attention. The concentration of wealth in relatively few hands provides capital for the expansion of business, and for philanthropy, research, hospitals, churches, and the higher education. If wealth were more evenly diffused, it would be used by the great mass of people for their immediate needs. They would have more comforts, and more luxuries—prettier clothes, more varied meals, more joy-rides, and the like.

But the great public ends now (paradoxically enough) served by private fortunes would go begging.

It is true, to be sure, that the rich men who now have to decide how so much of the country's annual income shall be spent, often decide foolishly. For one who gives largely for some splendid public end there are scores who lavish their money on rococo homes and great private estates, on polo ponies or private yachts or extravagant dinners, or whatever their particular fancy may desire for themselves and their families. Others give money to found colleges where the facts of evolution may not be mentioned and every teacher must profess some mediæval creed. Or they endow a mission board to convert the poor heathen who know no better to their particular doctrines. Or it may be a million dollars for a home for aged cats. The money is theirs and they can do with it as they like. . . . And similarly, the money which they invest may be put into the drilling of new oil-wells which are not only not needed but actually the means of economic loss to the community as a whole, even if the rich men make their expected profits. Or they may put millions into a few dozen more theatres in a city that has plenty of theatres but a terrible lack of homes for the poor. . . . In short, the expenditure of surplus income by the rich is very often foolish and anti-social. Autocratic control here, as everywhere, *may,* and sometimes does, work very well. But it often works badly. It is evidently not an ideal system. The decision as to how the surplus income of a country is to be spent is altogether too grave a matter to leave in the hands of a class of people who are often poorly educated, are subject, like other men, to all sorts of prejudices, and, like other men, are usually pretty selfish.

However, true as this is, there is a real point to the argument that cutting down the wealth of the rich is likely to reduce too greatly the accumulation of capital for investment and the donation of moneys for public purposes. If the surplus profits of industry, of land-value, and of the income from natural resources, are to be taken over, in greater measure than now, by the State, the public will have to be educated to want this money put into business expansion, into the building of necessary hospitals, colleges, parks, and the like. Indeed, one way to go about reducing the top-heavy fortunes of today would be to teach the people at large to see the need of more expenditure for public purposes. The need of great expenditure would involve a need of greater revenue, and the needed revenue could be got by increasing the taxes upon wealth. . . . But of course the rich are against that. And the Press, which they control, is against it. And the politicians, very many of whom they control, are mostly against it. . . .

Space limitations forbid the discussion of the many suggested ways of solving this problem. Our present system, like almost everything else on earth, has its good side and its bad side. We must try patiently to disentangle the bad from the good and replace it by something better. Here is, indeed, a task for our energetic and idealistic youth.

How Far Are Our Present Inequalities Due to Privilege?

It is customary among the upper classes to say, This is a free country; any one who is willing to work hard can amass a competence; on the whole, people get what they earn; if some people are rich, it is because they deserve to be. . . . The most cursory examination shows that such justification of our great inequalities in wealth is specious. Income is *not*

proportioned to hard work, or to brain-power, or to usefulness to society.

Consider the profits from business. As we have noted, they come rather from business strategy than from community service. Even apart from the sweating of employees and the squeezing of the public, profits from business go to those with a particular sort of ability, which we may call acquisitive ability. A man who develops this particular ability gets rich. Other men, just as able, and perhaps of far greater actual usefulness to society, develop their talents along other lines and do not get rich. Indeed, the men who make the inventions, who do the research work, who formulate the technical knowledge that makes a business profitable, seldom get rich. It is that other class of men, who exploit these inventions, who utilize this knowledge to their personal advantage, who get rich. . . . In short, if a man has brains, and moderately good luck, he may hope to make money, *if he devotes himself to that particular game.* He *may* not make his money by being hard and unscrupulous, by advertising his wares as worth more than they really are worth, by sweating his employees, by elbowing his rivals out, by ignoring the general welfare, though the temptations to such anti-social practices are enormous, and he need fear little or no reprobation for sliding into them. But in any case, he must train himself in this single art of making money. It is that art which makes a man rich, not hard work alone, or the use of unusual brain-power for the public good.

And then there is the very large element of luck. One man inherits a fortune with which to start in business; another starts with nothing but his brain and hands. One knows the right people, has "pull"; the other has only himself to rely upon. One makes a lucky gamble in some stock

or commodity; another, with no more shrewdness, loses out. A thousand unpredictable factors enter in. Most business is speculative, and good fortunes are largely the result of good fortune. . . . The poor, in general, work as hard as the rich. And while our "captains of industry" are usually very able men, there are plenty of men as able who never get more than a very modest income.

Further, a very considerable proportion of the income of our upper classes comes, not from their work, but from property owned. According to the Income Tax reports, at least ten billion dollars annually out of the national income of over fifty billions is in some form of "unearned income." This includes rent, interest, dividends, and profits on the sale of stocks, bonds and real estate. If we were to include under "unearned income" the excess profits of business, beyond a certain reasonable salary for management, we should have to say that something like a third of the national income was "unearned."

Very striking are the fortunes that have been made through the increase in value of real estate. Real estate in New York City alone has been increasing in value by several hundred million dollars a year. The Astor fortune, of about half a billion dollars, was accumulated chiefly in this way. A typical example is the plot on the corner of Fifth Avenue and 37th Street, where the Tiffany building stands. This plot was sold in 1863 for $40,000, in 1901 for $700,000, in 1903 for $1,372,000; and its value in 1927 is estimated at $2,500,000. . . . At times of real estate booms, as recently in Florida, land may double its price, or quadruple it, within a year; some parcels of Florida land sold for twenty or thirty times their valuation three years before. . . . A very considerable proportion of the wealth of the upper class in

America has thus come into being; not through any services rendered to the community by the holders of real estate, but through the increase in population, and the building of streets, sewers, water works, fire departments, schools, etc., with public moneys. This wealth has been socially created; yet we have allowed it to go into private pockets. In many cases no particular shrewdness was employed; but where the speculation was based upon a careful study of trends, it is still true that such use of human brains is purely selfish, contributing nothing to the welfare of the community, and, by any canons of social justice, *deserving* no reward.

What is true of real estate is true of the ownership of the natural resources of the continent. We have allowed title to our coal and oil and timber, and the various minerals, to pass into the hands of a relatively small class of shrewd or lucky people. Many of these have made fortunes by selling these things to the rest of us at a high price. Most of them have shamelessly wasted these precious and (for the most part) irreplaceable natural resources, caring only to skim off the cream and make a large immediate profit. Never before in history has reckless exploitation and waste proceeded on such a scale. Fortunes made in this way are, again, not *deserved,* by any ethical standard. The hard work and skill put into the business of getting and marketing natural resources deserved, indeed, to be well paid. But the value of the coal, oil, and minerals themselves was not created by the lucky owner; it might well have been reserved for the public treasury. And the money made by wasteful methods of exploitation is "tainted money," if there ever was any.

How can we say, again, that fortunes are deserved which are made by speculation in the various markets? Here is a

striking specimen of this sort of fortune-making; the clipping is from a New York daily paper of April 12, 1927:

> Wall Street heard yesterday of a startling new stock market coup by Jesse L. Livermore. On the word of persons known to be in his confidence, it was reported that he had increased his bank account by $4,000,000 in a cleverly manœuvred pool operation in the stock of the Freeport Texas Company. . . . Brokerage interests . . . said he unquestionably had profited handsomely; and they were quite prepared to accept the $4,000,000 figure.

Many contemporary fortunes have been built up, or greatly increased, by speculation, no service having been thereby rendered to the community. Fortunes have also been lost. But because some people throw money away does not make it right that others should rake it in, without earning it.

Another form of undeserved income is that which accrues to manufacturers because of the "protective" tariffs—the tariffs that protect profits. It is obvious that tariffs obstruct trade, and are thus bad from the economic point of view. It is also true that they tend to provoke bad feeling between nations, and are thus one of the contributing factors which make for war. But our present point is that these "combinations in restraint of trade" are primarily a scheme by which a small group of manufacturers can make money by forcing the rest of us to pay higher prices. Members of a recent Senate Committee on Finance estimated that the Ford-McCumber tariff law imposes between three and four billions of dollars a year in higher prices upon American consumers. Exporters of other goods are hurt indirectly, since the limitation of imports necessarily limits exports, in

the long run. The privileged manufacturers assert that wages are kept higher by high tariffs; but, as economists keep pointing out, our high wages are due to relative efficiency, particularly to our unprecedented use of mechanical power to multiply the products of human labour, not to the fact that such and such goods are being produced rather than those other goods which would otherwise be produced to balance the goods which, without the tariff, would be imported. . . . No, this is merely clever camouflage. The tariff is essentially a method of diverting a larger share of the national income into a few pockets.

It should be obvious that a great fortune can not be *earned;* it must be, in some way, the fruit of "privilege." No one in this country *earns* more than, say, the president of a great university, or a cabinet-minister like Herbert Hoover. Such men are among our ablest; and they give their brain-power without stint for the public good. They earn, at most, around $15,000 a year. But suppose such men, and unusually able business executives, may be said to earn $25,000 a year by their service to the country. Such men's expenses are heavy. Suppose, however, they can lay aside $10,000 a year. Such salaries would be rarely earned before later middle life. But suppose $10,000 a year is saved (without interest) for thirty years. As an elderly man, our leading citizen will then have $300,000. This is not a great fortune. There are some hundreds of people in this country whose *annual income* is in excess of that figure.

Economists customarily distinguish, as the Income Tax blanks do, between "earned" and "unearned" income. All large incomes fall, for the greater part, into the latter category. And many people of moderate means eke out their earnings by an additional "independent" income, from

stocks, bonds, rents, or royalties. Is there any moral justification, i.e., any justification from the point of view of the general happiness, for this unearned sort of income?

Undoubtedly many underpaid people, such as ministers, professors, research workers, and the like, are quite dependent, for maintaining a comfortable standard of living, upon such outside sources of income. But the need here would seem to be to pay an adequate salary to these people rather than to count on their correcting one injustice by another.

To the present writer, as to many others, it seems clear that all unearned income is unjust and socially inexpedient. Every form of it constitutes a Privilege to take so much out of the national income in addition to what is earned by services rendered. It is here that the crux of the problem of "distributive justice" lies. . . . We need more outspoken critics of our civilization like Bernard Shaw, who tries to shock us by saying:

> If we were all as resolute and clear-sighted as Undershaft, an attempt to live by means of what is called an "independent income" would be the shortest way to the lethal chamber.

A gentle vegetarian like Mr. Shaw would never really condemn any one to the "lethal chamber." But is he not right in his condemnation of the principle of unearned income?

The task of remedying these manifold injustices will be long and arduous, perhaps in part impracticable. But because the task as a whole is stupendous, we should not cease from our efforts to make, step by step, some amelioration, some approach, however piecemeal, toward a fairer system of distribution.

CHAPTER XIV

SUPPRESSION OF OPINION

Why Is the Right of Free Speech Important?

THOSE who profit by selfishness in business and politics naturally wish to keep the facts from public attention. Conversely, liberals, who wish to remedy abuses and *improve* our methods and morals, need for that purpose the utmost freedom of speech. Our great forefathers, such men as Jefferson, Webster, and Lincoln, gave the ideal of free speech memorable expression; and it has figured conspicuously among American ideals. None, however, has expressed it more pithily than the great Frenchman, Voltaire, when he said to Helvetius, "I wholly disapprove of what you say, but I will defend your right to say it, unto death."

It takes a generous and liberal spirit to want free speech for *others,* when these others have beliefs contrary to our own, and say things that seem to us untrue and harmful. But this is the very point of the ideal of free speech, that men should be free to say even what other men hold to be harmful and untrue. For no one attempts to suppress utterances which he believes to be true, or even utterances which he believes to be untrue but unimportant and harmless.

With the spread of education, and the consequent development of individuality and the critical attitude, more and

more people will have ideas of their own, ideas differing from the dominant ideas, in the fields of religion, politics, morals, and the economic order, and will expect the right to express these ideas openly. Why have men of vision everywhere deemed this right so important? Perhaps, if they have analyzed their ideas, for three reasons.

In the first place, they have instinctively rebelled against suppression of their own opinions; and this has made them sympathize with their fellowmen everywhere in their resentment at repression. Men of any sort of individuality feel stifled when they dare not say what they think; they are not really *living*. Free speech is a good because it is one of the things that normal human beings most *want,* and whose denial, therefore, brings unhappiness.

A second reason adds its weight to the first. It is not merely that men want freedom; they will make a lot of trouble if they are not granted it. "Repression is the seed of revolution," said Woodrow Wilson. An English publicist recently warned the House of Commons against taking from the rattlesnake the rattle by which he gives warning of his presence. By preventing the expression of opinion we drive it underground, where it becomes more dangerous. The Freudians have shown us what grave disturbances are produced by repressed desires in the individual life. Just so in a society, ideas and wishes that do not find outlet in words are apt to become more and more radical, more and more hostile to existing institutions, more and more dangerous to the existing order.

A paradoxical result of this truth is that it is precisely the conservative who needs to insist most earnestly upon freedom of utterance. Mr. Justice Holmes has recently declared that

> with effervescing opinions, as with the not yet forgotten champagne, the quickest way to let them get flat is to let them get exposed to the air.

. . . . . .

On the other hand, if you *want* revolutionary action, you should welcome the forces of repression. John Dewey wrote the other day:

> That is just what a great new force should not want—a cheap safety-valve. Steam is needed to overcome obstacles, and it should not be wasted in talk that merely blows it off. Shooting off the mouth is an easy way in which to dissipate force. The reactionary, with his predestined assistance to the radical, can be trusted, when any matter is really important, to prevent this cheap and easy road from being taken. He makes it necessary for men to seek for the reality of freedom instead of being contented with an inflated sense that it is attained when talk is unconfined.

In the United States, at present, there is no danger of volcanic explosion, in spite of considerable stifling of free speech. We are far too prosperous, and the great majority are far too satisfied and conventional. Conservative respectability may sit on the lid with safety; no cataclysmic upheaval need be feared in our day, however minority opinions are throttled. But this may not continue to be true for very long, as history goes. As disease-germs thrive in darkness, so ideas dangerous to an existing order flourish when they are kept underground. The preaching of extreme or shocking ideas is far more effective when carried on by men who have been denied the elemental right of public utterance. And when men find that they suffer for saying what they

think, they develop a temper of hostility, their ideas become fixed, stubborn, and extreme. A radical view on some one matter grows into a general disrespect for existing authority and for the sheep-like conventionality of the majority. This is the temper that might eventually spread to the point of engendering that revolutionary spirit, that use of violence, which we have already, in an earlier chapter, decided to condemn.

If extreme and dangerous ideas are to be tempered into more moderate and reasonable opinions, it must be by letting them express themselves freely. All attempts to browbeat, to punish, to ostracize those who hold unpopular views result, normally, in intensifying their convictions. Thereafter no argument will affect them. Obviously this is a wrong-headed way to combat foolish ideas. The better way is to be indulgent with them, to meet them fairly in argument, to show, without dogmatism or heat, the reasons for the sounder views. It may be taken as an axiom that nothing will rid men of foolish ideas unless they feel free to express them. There can be no effective defence of any beliefs unless the field is left open for men to criticize and argue and defend contrary views. Whether, then, we believe in the general wisdom of existing morals and institutions, or whether we look forward to great changes, but wish them to come by evolution rather than by revolution, we must zealously guard men's rights to express their opinions unmolested. Whatever changes come, then, will have been preceded by open discussion, probably over a considerable period, and will be far more likely to be salutary than changes which come as the result of explosion following repression.

But there is a third reason, and the most important of all,

for our ideal of free speech. We need new ideas. Mankind suffers from obsession by crazy and shocking ideas, but suffers far more from mental inertia. We need a free play of criticism upon all our institutions and practices; we need the amplest opportunity for converting minority- into majority-opinions. That country prospers most intellectually—and therefore in the end politically and economically—which has complete free trade in ideas. We may frankly admit that most unpopular ideas are foolish. The point is, if we try to suppress the foolish ideas, we suppress the good ones too; only in an atmosphere of freedom will the valuable ideas get openly discussed and find gradual acceptance. It is a case for applying the parable of the wheat and the tares; they are too inextricably intertangled for us to separate them; we must leave the winnowing to time.

This, of all places, is where we should be humble. Who are *we* to pass sentence upon the truth or untruth of ideas? Our own opinions we must have, and to them we may properly try to convert the world. But we must let others have their opinions too, and leave them equally free to convert the world, if they can. We must not assume to be both advocates and judges. We must remember that, as Emerson said, every truth was once a private opinion. Many of the ideas which are at the foundations of our contemporary life are ideas which men were persecuted for holding, not so long ago. Can we be sure that we are wiser than preceding generations to discriminate the gold from the dross in ideas that cross current conventions? That would be unwarranted conceit and dangerous presumption.

For these three reasons, then, we must be zealous to guard the right of free speech for our fellows: because freedom to express their thoughts is a great satisfaction, and repres-

sion a great grievance, to normal men; because free expression of opinion leads to the mutual correction and tempering of extreme views and acts as a vent for restlessness and dissatisfaction, whereas repression leads to bitterness, to extremes of opinion, to intensity of conviction, and ultimate explosion of a dangerous sort; and because, if we are to avoid stagnation, needless suffering, and exploitation by the clever and unscrupulous, we need the free play of open criticism upon all existing practices and institutions.

Are There Exceptions to the Right of Free Speech?

There are few, if any, moral rules not open to exception. What exceptions should we make in this matter of freedom of speech? We must be wary of generalizations; it is a matter of balancing the harm done in the concrete instance by unlicensed speech against the evils of suppression, of which we have been speaking. But to open up the subject, we may mention certain cases where repression is commonly considered legitimate.

Most civilized States have laws against slander—defaming a person's character without good evidence that the statements made are true. Such laws are probably necessary; malicious slander is a very mean thing, and may do much harm not only to the individual slandered, but to his family, to the business or institution or party with which he is associated, and to the public, which, being improperly prejudiced against him, may reject his further services. If unrestrained, slander may be used in political, economic, or religious strife as a subtly poisonous and often effective weapon. So, even though defamatory statements may be honestly made, it seems fair to protect people from them by allowing the injured party to prosecute the slanderer. Such prosecution

will naturally be made only when the person slandered knows that the aspersions cannot be substantiated.

But we must be careful not to confuse slander with exposure of actual wrong-doing or with criticism of policy. It is of utmost importance that the citizenry should be free to criticize public officials; indeed, such criticism should be considered a public duty. We are altogether too tolerant, as a people, of lazy and inefficient, even of dishonest and servile politicians, of narrow-minded and ignorant preachers, of selfish and unscrupulous business men, of statesmen actuated by a jingoistic and dangerous nationalism. Such criticism—as found, for example, in the pages of some of our liberal journals of opinion—is sometimes called muck-raking, sometimes labelled by the blindly patriotic as down-right treason. But the true patriot is the man who is clear-sighted enough to see the ignorance and stupidity and selfishness of those who are in positions of power or leadership, and who is brave enough to point them out.

If the phrase "one hundred per cent American" means that each of us should be willing to subordinate his personal welfare to the welfare of our people as a whole, not occasionally, in times of crisis, but all his life long, then we cannot too enthusiastically repeat it. But if it means that we should be a hundred per cent satisfied with our country as it is now, with the people who are now in positions of leadership, with our legislators and executives, our courts, and our constitutions, in their present state of efficiency, it is the worst slogan we could find. Our Federal Constitution has already been improved by nineteen amendments, some of them quite radical; doubtless the future will witness the passing of other amendments, and perhaps the framing of a new Constitution, better suited than that of 1783 to the

needs of some future century. Certainly complacency with the political vision of our forefathers, remarkable as it was for their day, is utterly alien to their spirit; and it is inevitable that the growing experience of our people should devise new laws and new formulas for their expression.

Our courts, too, are presided over by very fallible men, and need a constant watchfulness on the part of intelligent citizens, as has been seen recently in the Sacco-Vanzetti case in Massachusetts. President Roosevelt was so impressed by his experience of the fallibility of our courts that he earnestly advocated the recall of judges by popular vote. This plan is open to the serious objection that demagogues might stir up a wave of popular feeling against a judge who, though efficient and incorruptible, had offended the Powers That Be. It is important that judges should be unafraid of the passion and prejudice of the mob. But Roosevelt was a hundred-per-cent American, if there ever was one; and if he criticized courts, constitutions, and politicians, it was because his wide experience had shown him how far from perfect they are.

Recently the President of the United States, or his official spokesman, has on several occasions admonished the people not to criticize the Administration, particularly in its conduct of foreign affairs. The Secretary of State, likewise, has begged us not to embarrass his Department by the expression of disagreement with its policies, on the ground that to create the impression abroad that opinion in this country is divided is to encourage resistance to our Government's demands and to hamper the successful execution of its policies. . . . To the present writer such a request seems deserving of stinging rebuke. It is one thing to make a fair appeal for support, backed by a careful array of evidence, showing the reasonableness of the Administration's policy; it is quite

another thing to seek to hush up disagreement and demand conformity with whatever policy the Government in its infinite wisdom may see fit to adopt. Must we refrain from disapproving the debt-collecting policy of our Government, its high tariffs, its laissez-faire policies with respect to big business or the conservation of natural resources, its high-handed attitude towards Mexico, Nicaragua, and other Latin-American States, if we honestly and seriously disagree therewith? If gunboats are ordered to bombard Chinese towns, are we to refrain from criticizing, lest the Chinese be encouraged to redouble their pleas to be let alone? It is clear that democratic government can proceed in no such way; its success is dependent upon a continuous bombardment of criticism, a constant watchfulness on the part of citizens for blunders, for incompetence, for short-sightedness of policy, as well as for dishonesty and graft. It is better that officials should have to weather a storm of ill-advised and intemperate criticisms than that we should connive, by silence, with their errors of judgment, their prejudices, and their follies.

When it comes to open criticism of *other* countries' governments, or of the manners and morals of other peoples, there is much more to be said for the politeness of silence. We have no responsibility for saving their governments from making blunders, and usually little or no influence upon them. Courtesy must not make impossible demands upon us; it is part of our own education that we should discern the follies of our contemporaries abroad. A discerning critique of Fascist Italy, of Soviet Russia, of French policies in Syria and Morocco, of Mussolini's attitude toward the population question, or Premier Baldwin's attitude toward the trade-union movement in England, may help us to dis-

cern dangerous tendencies in our own country. And criticism from abroad may sometimes be of salutary influence, especially if it approaches a real consensus of condemnation. But on the other hand, the habit of derogatory criticism of other nations leads usually to bad feeling, and is one of the underlying causes of war. It is probably impossible to draw a line between legitimate and illegitimate aspersions upon foreign peoples and their public officials. But the politicians and the newspapers which give vent to violently anti-British, anti-German, anti-Russian sentiments do great harm in widening the gulfs between the peoples of the earth; and this bias against a foreign people should be condemned by public opinion, though it is probably not feasible to forbid it by law, without stifling legitimate expression of opinion. . . . The patrioteers hold that it is legitimate to criticize other peoples to our hearts' content, and unpatriotic to criticize our own dominant policies. But surely the precise opposite is our duty—to be vigilant in casting the beams out of our own eyes and to be as polite as possible with respect to the motes in our neighbours' eyes.

There is a proper limit, however, to tolerance with respect to speech on political or economic matters. We must not allow men openly to incite others to break existing laws. We have seen that the law-abiding spirit is of crucial importance in a democracy, and that law-breaking must be punished, even though on occasion our consciences may approve it. And now we may add, surely, that if it is inexpedient, in a democracy, to allow men to break laws with impunity, it is inexpedient for us to allow them to urge others to break laws. But we must not confuse direct incitation to law-breaking with speech that merely has an indirect tendency to lead some people to break laws. A vigorous attack upon

the Prohibition Amendment might produce such contempt for it in a man who loved his liquor as to overcome pre-existent scruples and lead him to violate the law. A scathing criticism of some public official might even lead an unbalanced person to assassinate him. Such consequences must be endured. We must be free to criticize both law and human beings. We must be free to urge the repeal of laws which we deem undesirable, and the removal of officials whom we deem obnoxious. But we draw a pretty clear line when we make it punishable to *break laws,* so long as they remain on the statute books, or to *advocate publicly the breaking of them.*

Speech which incites to what we consider vice but is not a criminal offence, will necessarily fall under our condemnation. But if the act in itself is not criminal, the incitation to it cannot be made criminal, and must be tolerated. The line between legitimate enjoyment and "vice" is, of course, very vague at best, and there is the widest disagreement as to what acts are vicious. So this is a field not for the law, but for our personal influence, through the weight of our disapproval—which must be tempered by generous sympathy and the realization that what is annoying or disgusting to one person may be delightful to another. We must not seek to urge our standards upon others except as we think we see serious reason for doing so.

Speech which is offensive to the majority by its "indecency" may legitimately be prohibited, in public places. The concept "indecent" is vague, and will be interpreted differently in different places. But it is no great hardship to be deprived of the right to such speech in public as may be considered indecent. Indeed, where indecent speech is found upon the stage, it is usually imposed upon the players by

those who are making money from the show, and its deletion would often be even more of a relief to the players than to the public. But if such restraint is irksome to some, it is still expedient that the comfort of the majority should be considered, since no danger of the loss of valuable ideas, or of revolutionary explosion, is involved. The question as to what constitutes a "public place" is arguable. Perhaps theatres and music-halls, for example, may be considered private, since no one goes there except voluntarily, to hear what he may expect to hear in that particular place. If some people enjoy, in such places, what others call "indecent" (or "profane," or "blasphemous"), the latter more refined, or more prudish, people may stay away. In any case, it is a matter of taste, rather than an important matter of morals, and need not detain us.

Doubtless some day we shall come to demand a reasonable degree of truthfulness in advertisements; free speech which misleads buyers by telling lies about goods, of whatever sort, is plainly a misuse of the right, and often has serious consequences. Perhaps we shall find out how to curb the misstatements in newspaper reporting, and how to protect ourselves from the flood of one-sided and misleading propaganda by which we are now beset. There are many problems to be solved, and we must not let the cry of "free speech" overawe us. But at present, slander and direct incitement to law-breaking are perhaps the only clear-cut cases where the right of free speech must yield precedence to other rights.

Are We Subject to Suppression of Opinion?

What is the situation in the United States, in the second quarter of the Twentieth Century? Is the right of free speech

adequately safeguarded, or are we subject to persecution if we hold minority opinions?

Every one knows that several of the southern States, following Tennessee, have made it punishable to teach in any public school or college the facts—which are now accepted by all scientists of any repute—concerning the evolutionary descent of man. Campaigns are being vigorously pushed in many States to forbid the expression of other views opposed to the teachings of the Bible. The verdicts of science will ultimately prevail, even in these benighted regions, as the Copernican theory has prevailed over the similar opposition of an earlier day. But in the meantime educated men and women are muzzled, and all who do not agree *in toto* with the dogmas of the self-styled "fundamentalists" are not only visited with obloquy but often have to choose between hypocrisy and losing their positions.

This is the most notorious breach of academic freedom in this country. But it is only a small part of the story. Religious liberalism, and still more economic and political liberalism, have cost thousands of teachers their jobs in this Twentieth Century. The annals of the American Association of University Professors furnish the details, with scrupulous accuracy, of a number of dismissals of college professors. The cases of mere instructors and of public school teachers are seldom discussed outside of their immediate circle of friends. But every patriotic American should read Upton Sinclair's books, *The Goose-Step* and *The Goslings*. These books are one-sided, and, taken by themselves, give an unfair picture of our educational system. But—discounting the author's generalizations—the *facts* there presented are such as to humble our pride in our "sweet land of liberty."

This matter of freedom of teaching—like so many other

matters which we have barely mentioned—deserves a volume in itself. We can merely point out here that, although complete freedom is granted in some of our best institutions, like Harvard and Vassar, and the University of Wisconsin under the vigorous presidency of Glenn Frank, the great majority never have granted complete freedom. The fight for the freedom of the teacher is, indeed, hardly begun. Those who teach uncontroversial subjects may fail to realize the pressure under which the teacher who has to do with morals, religion, the social and political sciences, and biology, lives. Most of these teachers are not conscious of the pressure because they are as prejudiced as their trustees or boards of education. But many a thoughtful and intelligent person with a gift for teaching has discovered that the profession is no place for him. Yet our educational system is the one place above all others where we need intelligent and thoughtful people; the throttling of the teacher is one of the most serious dangers to the Republic.

The throttling of the minister of religion by committing him in advance to the particular set of dogmas of a given church is so familiar to us that most people take it for granted as inevitable. But this matter we leave to a later chapter.

There are others besides teachers and ministers who are in danger of losing their livelihood if they utter views or publish facts which their employers do not wish aired. In Russia, in spite of the dictatorship of the Communist group, or rather as a considered aspect of its policy, the factory workers are encouraged and expected to state their grievances, to criticize the management, and to suggest changes. In the United States, land of democracy, many (but happily, by no means all) owners of factories, mills, mines, and other

industrial enterprises, make a point of dismissing employees who are discovered to be "radicals." Not a few maintain spies among their employees to discover those who express dissatisfaction with conditions, in order to fire them before their "agitation" has caused the employers trouble. Such a policy of terrorism seems to pay, at the moment; so, often, does dishonesty. But just as honesty is the best policy in the long run, so the policy of unfettered discussion will be found to pay best in the long run. What a pity that American captains of industry should be in need of a lesson from the Bolshevists!

The ordinary citizen is fairly secure, in most parts of the country, in his right to express his opinions. If you are a Roman Catholic, or a friend of the negro, the Ku Klux Klan may get after you; but the terrorism exercised by that organization seems, at date of writing, to be rapidly passing. If you are a pacifist, or even if you venture to criticize the Constitution or the courts, or insist upon accuracy in American history or an unprejudiced discussion of the late War, the American Legion may get after you. And there are other organizations, too numerous to mention, which seem to find a large part of their zest in life in attacking people with whose opinions they disagree. Fortunately there are a few organizations of a better sort, such as the American Civil Liberties Union, which exists to defend the rights of citizens to freedom of speech, and the Congress of Forums, Inc., which assists in organizing Open Forums all over the country.

During the decade following our entrance into the War we witnessed a shocking wave of persecution of liberal opinion. Books and pamphlets were declared unmailable by the Post Office Department, and periodicals were sup-

pressed by the denial of second-class mailing privileges. The Espionage and Sedition laws meted out severe sentences to hundreds of men and women whose only offence was that they expressed "radical" opinions, or even that they belonged to an organization or party deemed too "radical" by the Government. The Department of Justice for some time after the end of the War conducted raids upon the premises of radical party headquarters, and maintained *agents provocateurs,* whose business was to join radical organizations under false pretences and even, at times, it is said, to incite the members to criminal activities, in order that the Government might get hold of them. The Bureau of Immigration caused the deportation without trial of hundreds of "aliens," some of them of long residence in this country, and of the most peaceful disposition, whose views were unacceptable to the Government.

This wave of persecution could be described in all its shameless details. But it is merely an illustration of a well-known war-psychosis, and is rapidly waning, as we recover normal mentality. Another war would doubtless bring another wave of persecution, and so might any intensification of class-bitterness. We must by no means assume that the ideal of free speech is very loyally held by most Americans. In many cities all over the country local ordinances give the mayor or chief of police discretion to grant or withhold permits for speaking in public halls or at street-meetings. Where the owners of some leading industry have dominant influence, speakers unacceptable to them are consistently debarred. Some State legislatures have recently refused to seat duly elected members of the Socialist party. Situations like these, and many others which might be mentioned, are disquieting. We need to fire America anew with that sense

of the importance of freedom of speech which animated the founders of the Republic.

To some extent suppression of opinion in America has been due to stupid but honest patriotism or conviction. But is it not likely that there is considerable "rationalizing" here? It would be an interesting task for the Freudians to discover what subconscious motives are operating upon the minds of the persecutors. Certainly upper class people, who profit by the existing order of things, should be particularly zealous to guard the right of free speech, lest it be thought that their reluctance to have matters openly discussed is, at bottom, a case of Power and Privilege seeking to retain their status.

However this may be, history shows that institutions and privileges protected against open criticism do not, in the end, fare well. Suppression has led inevitably either to stagnation and decay or to explosion and revolution. So if we love our country, we shall, above all things, cherish our heritage of liberty and insist that it be genuine and thoroughgoing. And that, let us repeat, means not merely liberty for you and for me to say what *we* think is true, but liberty for those whose ideas we deem untrue, and perhaps dangerous, to say what *they* think is true.

CHAPTER XV

POISONED JOURNALISM

Have We a Free Press?

WITHIN the past century the newspaper has become the most important of all influences upon public opinion. Most people are unaware of the extent to which their minds are coloured by the newspapers; they may believe themselves to be quite sophisticated and able to discount what they read. But conversation quickly discovers a high degree of correlation between the ideas they hold and those of the papers they read. Few of our citizens have been trained to think independently and accurately; only a small minority put themselves, by reading the best books, or even the weekly and monthly journals of opinion, in a position to evaluate what the daily papers say. The great majority have no antitoxin by which to protect themselves against the prejudice, the class or nationalistic bias, that is unobtrusively present in the selection of facts, the phrasing of headlines, the emphasis and the comment, of their daily papers. Hence it is of critical importance to examine the degree of impartiality with which our press reports and discusses the news.

We are apt to be rather proud of our free press in America. And in a very important sense we are right; our papers are not censored and controlled by an autocratic government,

as they are, for example, at date of this writing, in Fascist Italy. But in another, and equally important, sense the press is not free. You have only to ask the average editor or reporter to tell you, in confidence, his experience. Or read Upton Sinclair's record, in *The Brass Check,* of the suppression of facts by the newspapers. This book, like those mentioned in the preceding chapter, gives, by itself, a one-sided and unfair picture of American journalism; but it presents a vast array of undisputed facts, with which every patriotic American should be familiar.

Mr. H. L. Mencken wrote in *The Smart Set:* [1]

> I have been in almost constant practice as a journalist since the year 1899. I have held every editorial job that newspapers have to offer, from that of dramatic critic to that of editor-in-chief. To the best of my knowledge and belief, the average American newspaper, even of the so-called better sort, is not only quite as bad as Dr. Sinclair says it is, but ten times worse. . . . The trouble with the newspapers is that nearly all of them are now owned by men who regard journalism as no more than a handmaiden to some larger and more profitable enterprise—as a convenient means to the befuddling and anæsthetizing of a public that would otherwise be against them. . . . The men who work upon a newspaper so held in pawn know pretty well what to avoid. There is in nearly every newspaper office a certain Awful Name. It precedes that of God. On such a newspaper—that is, on the normal, the typical American newspaper—it must be obvious that the quest for truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth, is commonly mitigated by something not unlike policy.

[1] April, 1920. The whole article is worth reading, for its concrete details.

Here are a few typical paragraphs from articles by reporters, necessarily anonymous:

> We should starve if we limited our output to what we individually believe. . . . We are a lot of unconscious liars. We don't even care about the truth. All we care about is the "story"—the special side of the story which we think our paper wants.

> I could have turned in a story that would have turned the city upside down. It would not have been printed, of course, but that is beside the question. I could have quit my job or gone to jail or done something else to retain my self-respect. Instead I turned in the story that my paper wanted, tried to apologize to myself for a while, and then got so I didn't care.

> Pasted before each man is a typed schedule of prejudice, consisting of the names of men who must be given no free publicity. Here all prominent radicals and the business men who have refused to advertise in the paper are lumped in an eternal obloquy of silence.

> It not infrequently happens that the opinion strongly and even aggressively expressed in a newspaper is condemned or ridiculed literally by every one else in the establishment, from the managing editor down to the bright office boy. It is the opinion entertained by the publisher, and he orders it expressed.

A former reporter, now a Protestant Episcopal clergyman, published a few years ago in a conservative periodical an article entitled *Freedom of Press vs. Freedom of Pulpit,*[2] from which the following sentences are taken:

[2] The *Outlook,* Dec. 2, 1914 (Vol. 108, p. 774). The author is the Rev. Guy Emery Shipler. The whole article should be read.

> Newspaper owners will sing to you long on the high theme of "the splendid freedom of the press." But let Mr. Advertising Man from Rushabout & Company appear in the sanctum and growl, "Nope. That story don't go," and you'll hear the managing editor bawling into the city room: "Kill that Rushabout story!"

After explaining how he came to abandon the profession of journalism because of the lack of freedom to speak the truth, he contrasts favourably the greater freedom which he found within the Church. For example:

> I preached a sermon on conditions of labour among women. Giving a schedule of wages paid to women in the various branches of the city's industry, I included a list showing the amazingly low wage for shopgirls in the local department stores. . . . I had spoken freely in the pulpit what every one who was unprejudiced would admit to be the truth. The newspapers hadn't dared to print the same words, though they were credited to a man in no way connected with the paper. The statements were only such as are emphasized by every social worker of the day. The difficulty from the standpoint of the paper, however, lay in the fact that I had made the statements concrete by telling unpleasant facts about those corporations whose money was the very foundation upon which that paper, like every other in the city, was reared. . . . I am positive that if I were to preach the same sermon tomorrow, either here in this thriving Middle Western city or in the Eastern centre of culture where I formerly worked at the reporter's desk, not a paper would dare to print it. . . . The experiences which I have related convince me that in the public discussion of questions of social evils and

social injustice the freedom of the American pulpit today is greater than that of the American press.

At the time of the illegal and scandalous "deportations" of workingmen by employers in New Mexico, Judge Rodey of Albuquerque wrote:

> Most of the Southwest has no press that expresses real public opinion. Only a very few newspapers exist that are not to a more or less extent the "kept" press of the Big Interests. I deny that the people of the Southwest, that is, the overwhelming majority of them, approved the deportation from Bisbee; on the contrary they regarded that action as wholly criminal and outrageous; but there is no impartial press in sufficient number to give expression to this opinion of the honest people.
>
> The morning after the deportation occurred I personally wrote very vigorously against the outrage, and called upon our Governor to take action, but could get the matter published in only two or three newspapers in the whole Southwest, although I sent it to quite a few. . . .
>
> A short time later I took the same kind of stand against the deportations from Gallup to Belen, New Mexico, but also only a very few newspapers would publish the articles I wrote. . . . People in the East have little or no knowledge of the extent to which the Big Interests control in the Southwest.

Many reporters and writers of special articles whose work or interest does not lead them into forbidden fields, or whose bias is such that they would not be likely to offend the policy of the papers for which they write, are unaware of any curb. And there are papers whose owners make sincere efforts to be impartial. But even if we discount the critics

of our newspapers by fifty per cent, enough that is disquieting remains. It is increasingly true that it takes capital to run our metropolitan papers, and that rich men are getting control of them as vehicles for the propagation of the ideas which they wish the public to hold. This is not an exclusively American situation, it is coming to be the case in every industrial country. A prominent British journalist, J. A. Spender, recently wrote in the *Westminster Gazette:*

> The public would be astonished if it knew how few writers are regularly engaged in political journalism in these times and how little opportunity there is for the exercise of a free judgment. . . . During the thirty-three years during which I have been connected with journalism I have seen the power of the editor constantly diminishing and the power of the proprietor constantly increasing.

It is also true that the great news-gathering agency, the Associated Press, controls the greater part of the telegraphic and cable news. It chooses the reporters who shall cover important events, it sends its own picked men to keep the world informed as to events in Russia and China and the European capitals. It can give or withhold its service, and newspapers that cannot get it are choked out of existence. Many stories are told as to the way this great power is exercised, and in whose interest. The present writer is not in a position to judge of the facts. But it is clear that an agency of this sort, having almost a monopoly of distant news—except for a few great papers which can afford a staff of special correspondents—is in a position to select and suppress news, as well as to kill any paper of which its owners do not approve. Whether or not this power is mis-

used today, we can hardly call a press free which is at the mercy of such an organization, privately owned and exempt from any restraint upon the policy of its owners.

Further, unless a paper is owned by some one who is so rich that he does not care whether it pays or not, it must refrain from antagonizing advertisers. The metropolitan dailies get from a half to three-quarters of their revenue from advertising; and if its volume were seriously diminished they would fail. Any number of instances could be given, if space permitted, illustrating the difficulty of getting facts—not to say opinions—presented in the papers which would put in an unfavourable light the banks, the department stores, the big corporations of all sorts that subsidize the papers by their advertising. One or two instances which have come to the attention of the writer must suffice.

A few years ago a strike of rather critical importance for the labour movement took place in Kirschbaum's, one of the largest men's clothing shops in Philadelphia. For weeks the big Philadelphia papers ignored the strike in their news columns. They refused a paid advertisement setting forth the strikers' side of the struggle, three leading papers cancelling a contract for it the day before it was to be run. They then proceeded to carry large advertisements from Kirschbaum calling for workers to break the strike and representing conditions of work as perfect.

During the War these Philadelphia papers were against profiteering—at a distance. They gave news of the arrests of people, even of obscure people, in other cities than their own. But when the important firm of Gimbel Brothers in their own city was served with warrants charging them with violation of the Lever anti-profiteering law, they failed to mention the fact.

Significant omissions of this sort could be found by the thousand by diligent research. The records of many of our large corporations and business houses are unsavoury; but the facts will seldom be found in the daily press, unless in some obscure Socialist or Labour paper in which these firms would not advertise anyway. Our industrial order being what it is, who can blame the newspaper-owners? After all, a paper is published to make money. But can a press subject to such pressure be considered free?

How Is the Public Injured?

Suppose our important newspapers *are,* directly or indirectly, controlled by a comparatively small class of moneyed people. What of it? How are we injured thereby?

Well, in the first place, we can hardly hope to get impartial information and prognostication on matters where prejudice runs deep. For example, the news from Russia published in our leading dailies since the Bolshevist revolution has been persistently and seriously coloured by the bitter anti-Bolshevist bias of the A. P. correspondents and most of the special correspondents. This particular instance is capable of detailed proof, since a special number of that energetic weekly, *The New Republic* (August 4, 1920), exposed in detail the inaccuracies of what had been offered as news in *The New York Times* over a considerable period, comparing the contemporary dispatches with the actual facts, as they came to be later known. (The *Times* was singled out for exposure not as worse than the other papers but because of its great influence and its unusually large staff of foreign correspondents.)

Similarly the reports from Mexico and Central America, and from poor confused China, have been usually lacking

in sympathetic understanding and, far too often, misleading as to the facts. Since national policies are determined in the long run by the pressure of public opinion, it is a serious matter that we are often fed with one-sided propaganda when we need accurate statement of fact and impartial discussion. With respect to China, John Dewey, who knows that awakening people well, recently wrote:

> The springs of public opinion are being poisoned at their source. . . . Simply from the standpoint of self-interest, we need to ask whether it is not time to call a halt on the circulation and influence of these silly reports and prophecies. And from the larger standpoint of the influence of the United States in the world in making for peace and good will among nations, it is imperative to give heed to the question. . . . Our power for good is being systematically undermined.

Some papers with wide circulation are not only biased but blatantly jingoistic. Mr. Hearst (who is said to own hundreds of thousands of acres of oil-lands in Mexico) has persistently urged the use of force to maintain American capitalism in Mexico and Central America. When our Secretary of State announced a policy of intervention, Mr. Hearst printed a signed statement, inside a border of American flags, hailing it as "at last a real American policy." And Mr. Brisbane, long his mouthpiece, wrote, "Dollars without cannon behind them are feeble things, like flabby jellyfish. It is the cannon that transforms flabby dollars into vertebrate dollars."

When an American fleet arrived at the Golden Gate on its way to Hawaii recently, Mr. Cornelius Vanderbilt, Jr., owner of the *San Francisco Herald,* printed in that paper over his signature an article in which he said (italics his):

> The *next war*—and that war *may not be so very far distant,* if we are to believe reports seeping out of Tokyo and Washington—will be a *sea war. . . . There is a reason why this fleet lies in* San Francisco waters *today.* That reason will be forthcoming before so many months pass by. . . .

Such newspapers constitute a grave danger to the amicable relations of the peoples of the world. So long as mankind is divided into separate nations, each bent upon its own supposed interests, we shall need the co-operation of all people in positions of influence to allay passions, soften prejudices, remove causes of friction and create mutual understanding and sympathy. At present there is nothing to prevent the private newspaper owners from doing the exact opposite.

Class prejudice is far more obtrusive in our press than national prejudice. Mr. Roger Babson, in a public letter printed in 1920, said:

> The War taught the employing class the secret and the power of widespread propaganda. . . . Now, when we have anything to sell to the American people, we know how to sell it. . . . The employing class owns the press. There is practically no important paper in the United States but is theirs.

We need not suppose any conscious conspiracy to shield the power and privilege of the moneyed class. The men who control the press are for the most part sincere and well-intentioned in the attitudes and policies they advocate. To a large extent, of course, they are right; or at least, there is much to be said for their attitudes and policies. What is wrong is that we should be fed on so one-sided a diet.

Moneyed men will naturally believe in any system that favors them, just as the slave-owners believed religiously in slavery, kings and their courtiers in monarchy. Impartial discussion is not to be expected from them. Every thoughtful, open-minded reader knows that the daily papers are, in general, the last place where we can find a truly impartial discussion of economic and political issues. Or even a fair presentation of *facts*. For that we must turn to the books written by scholars, or to a few weeklies and monthlies which are really independent and interested in truth. But only a small fraction of the people go to these sources. The great majority get their ideas on current issues from the daily press, and from conversation with their acquaintances who are no better informed. Any one who studies carefully the news-columns and editorials of two or three representative newspapers, noting their one-sidedness, their prejudice, their stereotyping of conventional attitudes, their exploitation of primitive instincts, will cease to wonder at the social and moral backwardness of civilized peoples.

Of civilized peoples, not merely of our people. For though few foreign papers are as crudely sensational in type and style as many of ours, and though in a few foreign countries they are on a considerably higher intellectual level than most of ours, the problem is world-wide. Mr. H. N. Brailsford, a distinguished British author and publicist, recently wrote of the British press,

> Till I had fought an election myself as a Labour candidate, I never fully realized the countless ways in which every employer—one might almost say every member of the propertied class—can and does make opinion and govern by the use of his indirect moneyed power. It is enough to look at the function of the newspaper. Day by day, week by week, year by year, the Capitalist

> Press makes the thinking of this country. The printing machine weaves the mind of this country as literally as one may weave wool. The effect of the selected news, the ascendency of the suggested point of view, the unofficial censorship of the perversive bias, outweigh the benefit to the workers of every lowering of the franchise. In this world, as it is, there can be no Democracy, because there can be for the broad masses no thought that is independent of this direction and manipulation from above.

The worst of it is that matters are, in some ways, growing worse rather than better. One by one such newspapers as showed some independence and social-mindedness have failed or have been bought out. And an increasing amount of what figures as news in the papers is now really private propaganda, furnished by the publicity agents of various industrial and commercial concerns. By accepting this stuff, the papers not only keep the good will of these organizations, but save the expense of so much reportorial and editorial work. They may even be paid for publishing it. The publicity agents—there are thousands of them—are out, of course, to create good will toward their employers, to stave off adverse criticism, and to create opposition to any legislation or political policies that might affect their interests unfavourably. Unsigned "editorials" are now sometimes actually from the pens of such agents. At least one concern specializes in writing such "editorials," which are, of course, really advertisements, and which are paid for as such. Witness the following sentences from circulars sent out by an "Editorial Service":

> The . . . Editorial Service supplies the editorial comment for over a hundred daily newspapers throughout the country and we sometimes give widespread publicity

> to national organizations when supplied with interesting material. . . . In this timely editorial direct and effective mention would be given to any facts to which you wish to give widespread publicity. . . . I am able to guarantee to obtain publication in at least thirty-five daily newspapers throughout the country at a total cost to you of $350. Marked copies of the papers would be furnished. . . .

We have not spoken of the nastiness of the more popular papers, the lurid details of divorce cases, "love-nests," and scandal of all sorts. We have not spoken of the brazen hoaxes sometimes played by the more unscrupulous papers to sell Extras. For the yellowness of the Yell-Oh press, while disgusting and demoralizing, is not so serious a matter as the partisanship and prejudice which the more respectable press shares with the worst tabloids. It is annoying, to one who wishes to inform himself concerning current plays, that few papers will print discriminating reviews of them. We remember that able and honest dramatic critics, such as William Winter, and Walter Prichard Eaton, have lost their positions on our leading dailies because of their fearlessness and high standards of taste, and we realize sadly that the theatre-owners are advertisers. But these aspects of current journalism are not of such serious moment as its dead weight of opposition to the free and discriminating discussion of economic and political issues.

What Can Be Done About It?

Brief as the foregoing discussion has been, it has sufficed to show that journalism, though having a profound influence upon the public welfare, is carried on as if it were a purely private matter in which the public has no rights and the

newspaper owners no responsibilities. The ideal of "a free press" has in practice come to mean a press which its owners are free to use as they like, for their own purposes. The way out is not obvious. Freedom of speech *means* freedom to express prejudices, to carry on propaganda, to boost one's own interests. We can not tolerate censorship by the Government, or by any other body, unless it be in the minor matter of suppressing indecency and the details of scandals. It is not *suppression* we want, but more freedom—freedom for all the rest of us, who are not newspaper owners, to have *our* say, to express *our* prejudices, and to find the facts that *we* should like to know about, in our morning papers. In some way, the press must be made the servant of the people as a whole, rather than a weapon of propaganda, or a mere source of income, for a small group of people.

Certain specific reforms might be imposed by law. It might be required that all news-articles bearing upon matters of a controversial nature, and all editorials, be signed, and documented as to sources. It might be required that all misstatements be corrected, as soon as discovered, by a further statement in the same position in the paper and the same type. But it is doubtful if such laws would carry us far. They would engender a little more wariness in making statements easily proved untrue, but would not correct the essential one-sidedness of the favoured point of view. No, the law may well penalize egregious untruthfulness in advertisements, may well forbid the publication of details of crimes, divorce trials, and scandals. But this is not getting to the root of the matter.

What we want is to make journalism a responsible profession. Will that be possible under private ownership? In rapidly increasing degree reporters and editors are receiving

professional training. Organizations of journalists are adopting codes of ethics. More and more, newspaper men are going to resent dictation by the owners. But what can they do? The owners can discharge editors of independent mind. Is there any reason to suppose that the Hearsts and Munseys and Northcliffes and Stinneses of the future are going to develop a sense of public responsibility? On the contrary, there is reason to fear that they will more and more come to realize the power that lies in newspaper ownership and run their papers more and more cynically to fatten their pocketbooks or to further their interests.

Three possibilities suggest themselves. First, we might have endowed newspapers, run by boards of trustees. If such boards were so constituted as to represent fairly the various classes in society—say, one representative of the Chamber of Commerce, one of the Labour Unions, one of each of the important political parties, one from a university, one from a school of journalism, and so on—we might have therein some measure of guaranty that the paper would not be used to further some special set of interests or prejudices. And the endowment, by removing the necessity of making profits, would free the paper from the pressure of advertisers and others. But would the people read such a paper? They *want* the advertisements; and a paper without them would not seem like much of a paper. In any case, there are not likely to be enough endowed papers to solve the problem. And the likelihood is that the endower of a paper would make it representative of one particular class or group —as in the case of the *Christian Science Monitor*—and thus defeat the end of nonpartisanship which we are hoping to see attained.

Another suggestion is, that the journalists themselves

publish newspapers. A guild of journalists, if it could be made to include practically all the trained men, might put itself in a position to dictate terms to the owners, or at least to effect some mitigation of the present situation. But it takes a great deal of capital to run a newspaper, and the millionaire-owner would have a tremendous advantage. He could afford to pay bigger salaries to his editors and managers, to maintain a bigger staff of foreign correspondents, and in other ways to outbid the Guild. If the big advertisers refused to patronize the Guild paper, it is difficult to see how it could be made to pay. The privately owned papers would doubtless unite in calling the Guild enterprise Socialistic, and Bolshevistic; and in the present state of public education the supporters would not be numerous enough, or rich enough, to make it succeed. It would seem then that the most a journalists' union could expect to do at present would be to impose certain improvements of the present situation upon the owners, not to effect any sweeping change.

To the present writer there seems to be only one really hopeful way out. We must recognize that the press is a matter of as general concern as the schools and the post-office. Newspapers must be published at state, or municipal, expense, and thus be completely free from the profit motive and from the pressure of advertisers. They might even be delivered free to every household in a community; if so, the advertisers could probably not afford to boycott them. But they must not be subject to political control; that would be to jump from the frying-pan into the fire. They must be managed by professionally trained journalists, graduates of recognized schools of journalism, members of unions pledged to maintain published codes of ethics. Their news-dispatches must be signed. The Associated Press must, if

necessary, be required by law to give these papers its full service. Most important of all, they must have certain pages edited by executive committees of the various political parties, and other organizations, so that each important group of people in the community can express *its* facts, unhampered and uncensored. Such a paper would be, not a non-partisan paper (which is impracticable), but an omni-partisan paper.

The readers of a paper of this sort, instead of having their minds steadily warped in a given direction, would be confronted in each issue with the facts and judgments which the various parties deemed worth attention. Controversies would be waged back and forth on adjoining pages, day by day. Most of what was said would be bunk, as it is today; but one species of bunk would be printed side by side with another species, and in the long run the effective rejoinders which would be made to specious arguments, and the continual exposure of misleading statements, would lead to greater accuracy and caution.

Such a paper, to attract the average reader, would have to contain the usual features—sports, pictures, and all the rest. But it would be free from the need of printing nastiness and scandal. And if it were backed up by laws preventing privately owned papers from printing such stuff, it could compete in interest with them. A union of municipal newspapers might support a special corps of foreign correspondents, and, by interchanging local news, save much expense.

Thus journalism might become a form of public service. We have found that it is not expedient to leave our schools to private instruction; our public school system is our most significant achievement. But it is almost equally important to develop a public press; the time will perhaps come, before

very long, when we shall look upon it as a necessity equally obvious. Of course the existing newspapers will oppose it tooth and nail, and the politicians, and big business men, and all who profit by the absence of an intelligent and critical public. All the more reason why those of us who believe in intelligence should work for it with might and main.

Or if there is any better way, let us hear of it. Let us discuss the matter until we can agree upon what ought to be done. But let us not rest content with a situation like the present, with the sources of public opinion at the mercy of a few men who are in the business to make money or to further their own interests. Even if they were far more public-spirited than most of them are, it does not lie within the nature of any single man, or group of men, to present the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. Human nature being what it is, that must be a coöperative enterprise; only by the free and unhampered *clash* of fact with fact, and opinion with opinion can we hope to move onward toward the ultimate truth.

CHAPTER XVI

DEMORALIZING ART AND LITERATURE

How Much Influence Does Art Have Upon Morality?

MORALISTS have usually looked at art with eagerness and apprehension, as a force of great import for morals. Plato, poet and philosopher, in planning his Utopia, took care to exercise control over poets and artists:

> They are to be prohibited from exhibiting the forms of vice and intemperance and meanness and indecency. . . . And he who does not conform to this rule of ours is to be prohibited from practicing his art in our State, lest the taste of our citizens be corrupted by him. We would not have our guardians grow up amid images of moral deformity, as in some noxious pasture, and there browse and feed upon many a baneful herb and flower day by day, little by little, until they silently gather a festering mass of corruption in their own soul. Rather let our artists be those who are gifted to discover the true nature of beauty and grace; then will our youth dwell in a land of health, amid fair sights and sounds; and beauty, the effluence of fair works, will meet the sense like a breeze, and insensibly draw the soul even in childhood into harmony with the beauty of reason.[1]

> There are jests which you would be ashamed to make yourself; and yet, on the comic stage, when you hear

[1] Plato, *Republic,* 401.

> them, you are amused by them, instead of being disgusted at their unseemliness. . . . And the same may be said of lust and anger and all the other affections . . . in all of them poetry feeds and waters the passions . . . she lets them rule instead of ruling them as they ought to be ruled, with a view to the happiness and virtue of mankind.[2]

Skipping to the Nineteenth Century, we find Ruskin preaching the moral value and dangers of art, we find Tolstoy arraigning with vehemence the greater part of historic art and literature for its pride, its sensuality, its support of religious superstition and jingoistic nationalism, its triviality and moral irresponsibility. "Art is not a pleasure, a solace, or an amusement; art is a great matter . . . an organ co-equally important with science for the life and progress of mankind." [3]

If we attempt to analyze the power of art over life, we may point out various beneficial effects which it may have. It may serve as recreation, helping us to forget our troubles, giving us new courage, and a quickened sense of the wonder of conscious experience. It may occupy our minds with innocent excitements, and so serve as a wholesome substitute for more dangerous emotions and propensities. It may serve as a bond between individuals and social groups, bringing them together in common enjoyment and comprehension, instead of pitting them against one another, as do politics and industry. Some forms of art, particularly fiction and the drama, may help us to understand and sympathize with people unlike ourselves, and so to adjust ourselves the better to them. Most forms of art may, by arousing our emotions

[2] *Ibid.*, 606.
[3] Leo Tolstoy, *What is Art?* next-to-last page.

and focusing them upon moral ideals, inspire us to effort and sacrifice, to courage and patience, to love and service and other forms of virtue.

All these things art *may* do for us—besides just giving us enjoyment; and it would be easy to become eloquent, as many do, over its beneficent effects. But to what extent do the arts actually do all this for us? Artists and literary critics usually insist that art has nothing to do with morality, and will brook no interference from the moralist. Sophisticated people generally are apt to become irritated if moral considerations are intruded into a discussion of art. And some psychologists aid and abet this isolationism by minimizing the effects of the esthetic emotions upon life. In a well-known passage, William James declared that

> no matter how good one's *sentiments* may be, if one has not taken advantage of every concrete opportunity to *act,* one's character may remain entirely unaffected for the better. . . . A tendency to act only becomes effectively ingrained in us in proportion to the uninterrupted frequency with which the actions actually occur. . . . There is no more contemptible type of human character than that of the nerveless sentimentalist and dreamer, who spends his life in a weltering sea of sensibility and emotion, but who never does a manly concrete deed. . . . The habit of excessive novel-reading and theatre-going will produce true monsters in this line.
>
> The weeping of a Russian lady over the fictitious personages in the play, while her coachman is freezing to death on his seat outside, is the sort of thing that everywhere happens on a less glaring scale. . . . One becomes filled with emotions which habitually pass

> without prompting to any deed, and so the inertly sentimental condition is kept up.[4]

More recently, Professor Thorndike has pointed out the difference between the emotions aroused by art and those aroused in actual living, and has sharply questioned the practical influence of the former.

> The function of the pseudo-emotions is simply to give innocent pleasure and to be symptoms that the mind is at least healthy enough to enjoy unimpeded action. With our pseudo-emotions from novels and dramas we play at love or war as our children play at keeping store or hunting bears. . . . Play on, children of all Ages, says the wise man. Only do not imagine that you are saving your souls or remodeling your minds by the game.[5]

However this may be in theory, or for professional folk, it is a matter of record that art does profoundly affect the lives of multitudes. A series of magazine articles published some years ago offers many concrete illustrations of this, drawn from the lives of tenement-house people. Here are a few:

> A woman, after seeing Ellen Terry as Portia, said to the author of these articles, "It's a long time since I saw her, but I've never forgot the things she said 'bout havin' mercy, and how she looked when she said 'em. People ain't always had mercy for me; and when I've wanted to pay 'em back for it or be mean to anybody, I jes' remember her and what she said 'bout havin' mercy —and I don't want to be mean, 'cause of her."

[4] William James, *Principles of Psychology*, Vol. I, pp. 125-26.
[5] E. L. Thorndike, in *Teachers College Record*, Vol. IV, p. 200.

Another woman, after seeing *Othello,* remarked, "He believed everything he heard. Rememberin' how *he* ended has kept me from believing lots *I* hear."

A boy, almost grown to manhood: "I saw a play the other night named The Gay Lord Quex. The people in it are a bad lot, but they get out all right. The worst is the best, and they gets out best."—"But in real life it is different," I replied to his inference.—"Maybe it is," said the boy, "maybe it ain't."

Of Leonardo's picture, the Mona Lisa, a woman said, "I like her smilin'! I don't think it's 'cause she ain't got no sorrow for anybody or anything that she smiles; I think it's 'cause she *has,* and has got grit, too. It heartens me up surprisin', to look at her!"

Of a girl who had been reading a novel depicting loose morals, the author writes, "The book had harmed her, and harmed her beyond immediate help. From the power of books there is no protection; for the great ill done by them there is small remedy. That girl, living in a tenement, needing all the good influences possible or obtainable, had been hurt as only the unsophisticated and uncultured can be hurt by a morbid novel." [6]

The fact is, that in proportion as we get used to reading novels and poetry, or seeing plays and pictures, we cease to be moved to action by them. Our interest in them *as works of art* comes to outweigh our interest in the situation they portray or suggest. The esthetic interest banishes the moral interest, the intellectual satisfaction increases, the emotional and practical effect diminishes

The moral effects of music [and all forms of art] are

[6] Elizabeth McCracken, in *The Atlantic Monthly,* vol. 89, pp. 501-2; vol. 98, p. 521; vol. 90, p. 594.

> everywhere strongly felt, until it becomes developed and complicated. Then the pursuit of perfection, and the overcoming of technical difficulties, become ends in themselves; and while people learn deeper and more subtle powers of delight, they forget the moral side of art.[7]

Children, the unsophisticated and uncultured, and those who in spite of esthetic training retain a moral interest greater than their artistic interest, are profoundly affected morally by art. Artists and cultured dilettanti forget that they are themselves a relatively small group; the majority of our play-audiences and our novel-readers are more interested in life than in art. The art-lover has cultivated a contemplative attitude towards life; he does not want to reform it, he enjoys it as it is, with all its colour and contrast and infinite variety. His emotions are pleasantly stimulated, but his mood is dominantly one of reconcilement to evil; he is not stirred to action. He is thus pretty well immunized against the moral dangers of art, but he is also immunized against its morally beneficent effects. Art is for him, as religion is for even more, an opiate, lulling him with the beauty of a dream-world, instead of arousing him to better this world of importunate reality in which he and his fellows actually have to live.

As education spreads, the strictly esthetic attitude will doubtless become more and more prevalent, adding to the joy and solace of mankind. But in spite of our sophistication, and more than we realize, we shall still to some extent be affected by the plays we see and the books we read. And the really great artists will know that this is so, as Plato

[7] J. P. Mahaffy, *Social Life in Greece*, p. 452.

did, and Ruskin, and Tolstoy—and, in our day, Bernard Shaw.

> Bad theatres are as mischievous as bad schools or bad churches; for modern civilization is rapidly multiplying the class to which the theatre is both school and church. . . . The spread of dramatic consciousness is affecting conduct to an unprecedented extent. . . . The national importance of the theatre will be as unquestioned as that of the army, the fleet, the church, the law, and the schools.[8]

What Are the Moral Dangers of Art?

The moral effect of a work of art upon an immature and suggestible person *may* be disastrous. The commonest case is that of art which stimulates erotic excitement. Sex-plays, vulgar revues, indecent pictures, pornographic novels and periodicals, profoundly affect the emotionally unstable, inflaming them to sensuality and lust.

Sometimes this "red-light literature" (to use a phrase of Münsterberg's) is defended on the ground of the desirability of frankness, the importance of portraying the truth. But this is usually pretty obvious humbug. Many people, perhaps most people, *like* to see indecent shows or read indecent stories, now and then, or at some period of their lives. They are ashamed to acknowledge their taste, and so are fain to rationalize it. It is true that even very young children should be told all the important facts about sex, and that the traditional veil of mystery and prudery is far more harmful than utter frankness. But sex-education should be carried on in a scientific atmosphere, not in an atmosphere of art. Such matters should be discussed in a matter-of-fact way, as

[8] Bernard Shaw, *Preface* to *Pleasant Plays*.

one would discuss any other biological or psychological facts.

This does not mean, of course, that art must let sex alone; on the contrary, a very large proportion of the loveliest works of art will inevitably deal with some *motif* that has its roots in the sex-instinct. It does not even mean that direct "sex-appeal" is illegitimate; a beautiful nude figure, in sculpture or painting or on the stage, a "movie" hero who stirs the bosoms of his feminine audience, a passionate love-song, an opera like *Tristan and Isolde,* Dante's immortal description of the first kiss of Paolo and Francesca—such forms of art derive their primary appeal from the echo which they awaken in us of the divine emotion of love between man and woman. That primary appeal may be so overlaid with the beauty of form and colour, or sound, that the critic may entirely ignore it. But a sexless person would never feel the full thrill of these forms of art; nor, probably, does the emotionally withered art-critic who thinks of nothing but technique and virtuosity.

What the rational moralist objects to, then, is not the emotion of love, and certainly not frankness or truth; what he objects to is indecency, and the incitement of morbid and lustful emotions. He objects likewise—though the problem is not usually so acute—to the portraying of any other vicious or criminal attitudes in suggestive or seductive ways. Miss Repplier says that "the method of the stage today is to exploit the sins of the vicious for the entertainment of the virtuous." Maeterlinck, himself a poet and dramatist, says much the same thing.[9] The "movies" sometimes portray scenes in cabarets, brothels, opium-dens, gambling-houses, and homes of the degenerate rich, or scenes of murder,

[9] Maurice Maeterlinck, *The Modern Drama,* in *The Double Garden.*

robbery and other crimes, in such a way as to develop in youthful spectators whose morals are unstable an interest in these untried paths of wrong doing. It is not uncommon to hear social workers and other people acquainted with juvenile delinquents lay the blame for their downfall squarely upon the stage or the "movies."

> Is it not astounding that a city allows thousands of its youths to fill their impressionable minds with these absurdities which certainly will become the foundation for their working moral codes and the data from which they will judge the proprieties of life? It is as if a child, starved at home, should be forced to go out and search for food, selecting, quite naturally, not that which is nourishing but that which is exciting and appealing to his outward sense, often in his ignorance and foolishness blundering into substances which are filthy and poisonous. . . . There is no doubt that what they hear there, flimsy and poor as it often is, easily becomes their actual moral guide.[10]

Even more serious, in the present stage of the world's history, than any dangers we have yet noted, is the dangerous influence that art may have in stimulating the spirit of jingoistic or imperialistic nationalism. War has now become by all odds the gravest danger that confronts man; and anything that arouses warlike attitudes, or the lust for conquest and rule, or the enjoyment of military glory, or fear, suspicion, hatred, contempt, resentment toward foreign peoples, is poison of the worst sort. The dangers of sex-license and loose personal morals are grave enough; we do not want to increase the number of dope-fiends and gamblers, to create a crime-wave, to spread syphilis, or to raise the

[10] Jane Addams, *The Spirit of Youth and the City Streets*, pp. 79-82.

birth rate of illegitimate children. But these are minor matters compared with the destruction and agonies, the collective murder and suicide of war. And the power of art in this direction is portentous. Such a book as Blasco Ibanez' *Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse* may do an immeasurable harm in keeping alive fear, hatred, and resentment towards a neighbouring nation. All statues of war-heroes, all tales of successful wars, of glorious battles and heroic military exploits, all military bands and handsome uniforms, are—at this critical period of human life on earth, when it is touch and go whether civilization will survive or perish—as dangerous as sticks of dynamite in the road. But the mass of men are still so far from being educated to perceive the wickedness of war that it is useless, at present, for a mere moralist to discuss the ways in which an enlightened public might exercise control over the forms of art that stimulate those primitive and almost universal passions which make that collective madness possible. We may return, then, to discuss the censorship of art on the more familiar, and, to most people, more intriguing level of its sensuality.

And we must now note that this problem is, to a large extent, the problem of an individualistic money-seeking industrial order. Some indecent stories and plays would be written, some indecent pictures painted, for the sheer pleasure in indecency; but the vast majority of them are produced to make money for their authors and sellers. It is this commercializing of sensuality that is everywhere its most serious aspect. Why are there more vulgar and more-or-less nasty shows than clean and wholesome shows on the stage? Obviously because more people will pay to have their vulgar propensities tickled; just as they will pay more for

poisonous alcoholic drinks than for what is good for them. Few people have, individually, the power, or the desire, to curb their appetities when seductive stimuli are offered. But they can, by patient education, be brought to see what fools they have been making of themselves, and to work for the removal of temptations from the path of their children and their neighbours—and incidentally of themselves.

The stage is the particular target of moral criticism because it is so public and conspicuous, and because the commercialization of the theatre is so obvious.

> We have debauched the drama to the point where, to live at all, it must please; and the result is natural and logical,—the theatre lives only to please, not to elevate or to educate, not to cultivate any virtues. It has become a courtesan among the arts, whose trade is not to please the best people, but the most; not to cultivate lofty ideals and high standards, but to spread the lure and appeal to the fancy of the crass multitude. The theatre having become a commercial institution, it follows that the artistic side is subordinated to the commercial.[11]

Should Art Be Subject to Censorship?

In spite of the gravity of the dangers which uncontrolled art may have for life, there are many who advocate a laissez-faire policy. Among these are lovers of liberty, haters of Puritanism, and, of course, the artists themselves, the novelists and booksellers, the playwrights and producers. Bernard Shaw, who has suffered at the hands of the British censor, may be allowed to speak for the opponents of repression. The way for a young person to learn, he says, is from

[11] J. S. Metcalfe, in *The Atlantic Monthly*, Vol. 96, p. 728.

> unfettered access to the whole body of Fine Art. . . . To hope to find this body of art purified from all that is obsolete or dangerous or fierce or lusty, or to pick and choose what will be good for any particular child, much less for all children, is the shallowest of vanities. . . . There is no *good* art, any more than there is good anything else in the absolute sense. . . . We must read whatever stories, see whatever pictures, hear whatever songs and symphonies, go to whatever plays we like. We shall not like those which have nothing to say to us; and though every one has a right to bias our choice, no one has a right to deprive us of it by keeping us from any work of art or any work of art from us.[12]

The arguments for the hands-off policy are strong. Attempts at social control over art in the past have usually been clumsy, and either ineffective or tyrannical. It is impossible to define any of the terms which we have been using—indecency, sensuality, morbidness, vulgarity, jingoism, —with anything approaching definiteness. What offends one person seems innocent and perhaps delightful to another; what harms one is harmless to another. How can we possibly so control art as to make for every one's interests and needs? Any sort of censorship is bound to be more or less capricious, coloured by the personal tastes and ideals of the censors of the moment.

Further, where there is censorship, of whatever sort, there is danger of interference with artistic and moral progress. Stereotyped mediocrity will be passed, while what is radical and shocking to the conservative will be suppressed. Social control may easily be used to choke off progressive ideas,

[12] Bernard Shaw, *Preface* to *Misalliance.*

especially ideas dangerous to vested interests. Plays or "movies" may be prohibited on the ground that they "tend to excite class feeling," or to "bring discredit upon the agencies of government," or on the ground that they are unpatriotic, or blasphemous, or subversive of established institutions. If the censors are puppets of the Powers That Be, or if they are merely respectable unintelligent people, it is easy to see how they may block the free revelation of existing conditions and the spread of enlightened ideas.

Another objection has particular relevance to the problem of indecency. It is held by many that the sensible solution of this problem is to allow those who wish it to wallow in indecency until they are sick of it. The craving for lewdness is a product of repression, of unsatisfied curiosity and thwarted self-expression; moral reprobation enhances secret desire, prohibition gives it the savour of forbidden fruit, while a free rein soon produces satiety and loss of interest, if not disgust. A normal boy or girl, who has known the facts about sex and has seen naked bodies of both sexes from early childhood, who has been taught to look upon the phenomena of sex in a scientific and matter-of-fact way, and therefore understands the reasons why restraint is necessary, will find no enjoyment in vulgar jokes, no interest in indecent pictures or books. And if, by misfortune of unwise upbringing, he does have prurient desires, it is better for him to satisfy them in such relatively harmless ways, as a passing phase of his interest, than, by repressing them, to remain all his life prodded by morbid desires and unwholesome curiosity. Wise education, a policy of frankness in youth, followed by a normal sex-life, is all that is necessary; with that, we can safely let the public have what it wants in the way of art, literature, and amusement.

With most of this we must heartily agree. The case for frankness instead of evasion, knowledge instead of ignorance, familiarity with the human body instead of concealment, has been proved up to the hilt. But the traditional taboos that surround sex in our society are so deep-rooted that few of our youths grow up quite healthy-minded; the majority are in some degree unhealthy-minded in respect to sex. And while conditions are improving, they are improving very slowly. So we must reckon with audiences of youths and middle-aged people who are morbidly excited by sex-plays, by salacious shows and books and pictures. And, further, we must ask whether even healthy-minded people may not have their erotic impulses overstimulated. Sensuality easily becomes a consuming interest, when it is incited by constantly recurring stimuli; and, instead of being a passing phase which every one might as well have and be over with, it tends, when once well-rooted, to persist, or reappear recurrently, for many years. Now, while we do not wish our men to be emotionless robots and our women acidulous vestals, it is necessary, if they are to be all-round and useful human beings, that they shall not become sensualists. And as a safeguard against this, it is better that they shall not have easy and constant access to erotic stimulation.

If this is a just view of the facts, it will seem to most people necessary to exercise some social control over salacious art. No really great or beautiful works of art need be suppressed, only the cheap and nasty perversions of art. And though there is a real danger of Comstockianism, of Puritanic repression of what is relatively innocent and of what would be a harmless pleasure to many, the existence of such a danger would hardly justify us in giving up the

attempt at sane regulation. To the artists we may say, Yes, we believe in art for art's sake, but not (to quote a recent bon-mot) in art at any price. For art is but one interest out of many, in human life, while morality represents the totality of interests. What is right is what is best for the greatest number in the long run; and Plato was quite right when he said that "to prefer beauty to virtue is the real and utter dishonour of the soul."

> Art . . . provides an expression for the very impulses that morality is designed to restrain. Morality consists of an elaborate system of repressions of wishes that will not fit into the scheme of salutary and orderly living, a system exceedingly difficult to maintain, since impulse is ever waiting its opportunity to resist. Now art tends to destroy the morale of life by substituting expression for repression, in the very matters where repression is most necessary. The habit of discipline is destroyed. If the artist retorts that expression is in the imagination only, and is therefore harmless, the moralist has his clear reply that such expression is all the more harmful to discipline for that very reason, since it goes uncondemned and unpunished. By feeding the mind with cruel or voluptuous images, decadent art clouds that purity of the heart out of which many of the sweetest gifts of a good life come.[13]

> The 'realists,' 'naturalists,' and 'veritists' assert that art is an individual affair, that a man has the right to speak, print, or publish anything he pleases or that he can get another to like. Art as Master of Revels and Dispenser of Delights cannot, they say, attain its utmost if it be fettered by conventionalities. To naysay that

[13] DeWitt H. Parker, *The Analysis of Art*, p. 171.

free access of artist to patron is to kill inspiration and cut off humanity from choice springs of enjoyment.

For society to concede any such claim would be sheer folly. What madness, when we are all the time besetting the individual with our theologies and religions and ideals, and can scarcely keep him in order at that, to let the irresponsible artist get at him and undo our work.[14]

But *how* shall society exercise this control? Laws against indecency, enforced by arrest and prosecution after the fact, are useful for flagrant cases. But this machinery is cumbersome, and expensive both to the State, or municipality, and to writers and producers. Moreover, it is local in application, and serves to advertise the play or book or picture for the curious in other towns or States, as well as to stimulate a clandestine trade. It is in any case inapplicable to the "movies," which have in most towns only a one, two, or three days' stand. An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure; and suppression, if necessary, should occur before publication or presentation, rather than afterwards. It should be done without publicity, and by wiser people than the average police-official.

A state or municipal board of censors, if kept out of politics, as the phrase is, and made up of really intelligent people drawn from various social groups, is a possible solution. The trouble is, there are so few really intelligent people! An alternative is regulation by the artists and producers themselves. Such self-regulation is now a feature of the motion-picture industry in America. How satisfactorily it works must be left to the reader to decide. A plan for self-regulation of the New York stage was proposed in

[14] E. A. Ross, *Social Control*, p. 274.

February, 1927, by a Committee of Nine representing the actors, playwrights, and managers. The proposal was—modifying an earlier arrangement—that play-juries of seven members should be appointed, which might, by a majority vote, require suppression or revision of any play. The Actors' Equity Association, which has to some extent the whip-hand over the managers, was to enforce the verdicts, its members agreeing not to participate in any condemned performance.

Whether this plan would work satisfactorily is another question. But some plan of censorship before performance will probably be necessary if the presentation of plays and "movies," the publication of books and magazines and pictures, is to remain open to private commercial enterprise. It is well to have diverse experimentation until the best methods approve themselves by long experience. Care must be taken that political, economic, and religious bias does not obtrude itself. Probably censorship should be limited to cases of (a) obscenity, and vulgarity which is not necessary to artistic effect or moral purpose, (b) the representation of crime and vice in such ways as to teach them to the innocent, to excite morbid curiosity, or to stimulate brutality, (c) the presentation of anything that would tend to arouse fear, resentment, hatred, or ill-will towards foreign peoples, a lust for successful war, or a touchy and pugnacious spirit, (d) anything obviously libellous.

Can Art Be Used Positively for Moral Ends?

Whatever the actual influence of art upon conduct may be, there is no doubt that it might be very considerable; it is a great hardly tapped resource for moral improvement. Why not harness art for good ends? Here are floods of

emotion going to waste over novels and short stories, at the theatre, at concerts, at "movies"—going to waste in that they produce no changes in actual conduct. The churches have indeed learned to utilize music and noble architecture and stained-glass windows, to arouse an emotional attitude which the preacher can focus upon specific moral attitudes and resolves. Beyond that, though individuals are stirred by what they read at home or see at the theatre, and the more impressionable may be profoundly and permanently influenced thereby, we make no steady and concerted effort to use art as a means of promoting virtue.

There is a movement afoot to establish Community Theatres as schools of manners and morals, and particularly as a means of welding communities together.

> Our State, even in its small communities, cannot be held together by race or by religion. For a unifying force we must find a living expression of a great common ideal. We must depend upon a community of interest: we must find an institution in which great and small can find expression. The art of the theatre, or more precisely, the allied arts of the theatre, are utterly calculated to perform this service. . . . Too much stress cannot be put upon the value of the Community Theatre in providing a common cause for a community.[15]

There is another movement favouring the use of pageants and civic festivals for similar ends. When the mayor of St. Louis was asked by a committee in Boston concerning the effects of the civic pageant produced in St. Louis in 1914, he telegraphed that it "was of incalculable benefit to the city. The production received the hearty support of the

[15] Louise Burleigh, *The Community Theatre*, pp. 18, 109.

citizens and instilled in them a new civic spirit which resulted in the adoption of a new city charter and the voting of bonds for the completion of our municipal bridge where similar bond issues had been refused before." Mr. Percy Mackaye, who quotes this telegram, adds,

> One night at that time, after the third performance, I stood talking with one of the Scotch group, recruited from all parts of the city. "A funny thing this," he said to me; "I wouldna have thought till now that those dagoes could be such damn good fellers. We're proposin' to form a permanent club—us Scotch and the dagoes and German lads—just to keep in touch and not let us forget this." [16]

Community choruses and orchestras have, for their limited groups, a somewhat similar usefulness.

But all this is only a beginning. We must recognize that, as Mr. Mackaye says, "the people are not persuaded by philosophers, they are only persuaded by artists," that, in the statement recently made by an English playwright and endorsed by Jane Addams,

> the theatre is literally making the minds of our urban populations today. It is a huge factory of sentiment, of character, of points of honour, of conceptions of conduct, of everything that finally determines the destiny of a nation. The theatre is not only a place of amusement, it is a place of culture, a place where people learn how to think, act, and feel. Seldom, however (Miss Addams adds), do we associate the theatre with our plans for civic righteousness, although it has been so important a factor in city life.[17]

[16] Percy Mackaye, *Community Drama,* pp. 17-18.
[17] Jane Addams, *The Spirit of Youth and the City Streets,* pp. 83-4.

Perhaps some day we shall devise a way of realizing Plato's dream of a race of men steered insensibly into a noble and virtuous life through the influence of poetry, music, and the other arts. Or the more recent dream of Tolstoy:

> The task of art is enormous. Through the influence of art, aided by science guided by religion, that peaceful co-operation of man which is now obtained by external means—by our law-courts, police, charitable institutions, factory inspection, etc.,—should be obtained by man's free and joyous activity. . . . The task for art to accomplish is to make that feeling of brotherhood and love of one's neighbour, now attained only by the best members of the society, the customary feeling and the instinct of all men. . . . The destiny of art in our time is to transmit from the realm of reason to the realm of feeling the truth that well-being for men consists in being united together, and to set up in place of the existing reign of force, that kingdom of God, i.e., of love, which we all recognize to be the highest aim of human life.[18]

Whether or not we agree with Tolstoy's specific ideals, we shall be foolish if we ignore the moral potentialities of art. The big problem, the problem which lies beyond that of the elimination of nasty and vicious art, is the problem of how to use art consciously and skilfully to further moral ends.

[18] Leo Tolstoy, *What is Art?*, last page.

CHAPTER XVII

DOGMATISM AND INDOCTRINATION

Dogmatism and Its Cure

GREAT as is the harm that has been done to life in the name of art, it is nothing to the harm that has been done in the name of religion. For religion is one of the three greatest dynamic powers in the soul of man—the other two being patriotism and love. And whether it shall be productive of great harm or of great good depends, as in the other two cases, upon the direction which this great force takes. Religion brings in the idea of the Holy, the Sacred; it gives sanctity to whatever it touches. It may make certain beliefs sacred, and so immune to criticism; and these artificially protected doctrines may be obstacles in the way of free and honest human thinking, endangering science and corrupting education. It may make certain rites or ceremonies sacred; and these may be an unnecessary burden to conduct and at the same time a cheap substitute for the harder task of moral living. It may make narrow moral ideals sacred, and so deprive men needlessly of happiness and block the way toward saner and sweeter moral codes. Many of the worst wars of history have been Holy Wars, and most of the persecutions have been in the name of religion. Not seldom, in reading history, religion appears as man's greatest curse.

On the other hand, there is much to support the view that

it is man's greatest blessing. Religious emotion at its best is one of the very greatest joys of which man is capable, and the peace that religion may bring is the peace that passeth understanding. Further, it is religion more than anything else that makes men *care* for moral ideals, nerves them to effort and sacrifice. Or perhaps we may more simply say, it is when a man does care for ideals, when he espouses them gladly, dedicates himself to them, makes them his own deepest desire, that we call him religious.

Our problem is, then, how we can conserve the joy and power of religion, while escaping its evils.

The chief source of the evils of religion is dogmatism. The plain fact is that the infinitely varying cosmological and historical assertions of the vast multitude of ecclesiastical creeds have not the status of actual knowledge; they are at best assumptions, hypotheses, hopes, at worst preposterous absurdities. Religion has had no special way of finding out the truth on these remote or abstruse matters. Facts of any sort are the business of science—including in that term a scientific philosophy and a scientific history. If there is clear enough evidence for a scientific conclusion, there is no need of ecclesiastical dogma. There is no dogma of gravitation or of evolution; the facts are accessible to any one, and all intelligent people accept them. If, on the other hand, the available evidence is not such as to convince the unbiased mind, it is dishonest to teach a premature conclusion as the indubitable Truth. To do so is to pre-judge the issue, to answer difficult questions without going through the laborious task of examining the evidence on all sides, weighing contrary hypotheses, keeping the judgment suspended, and revising ideas continually in the light of new discoveries. It is people who take this short cut to their

beliefs who are dogmatic about them; they make up for their lack of universally convincing evidence by the loudness of their voices and the obstinacy of their assurance.

It is obvious that of the myriad varieties of theological doctrine most must be untrue. If we are scrupulously honest we must admit that we do not know any of them to be true. The evidence is too scanty, and open to too diverse interpretation. It is also obvious that there is no logical connection between any of these doctrines and the laws of morality. Whatever be the truth about God, the Universe, or the destiny of the human soul, justice and mercy and lovingkindness are right, selfishness, lust, and hate are wrong. Theological dogmatism is not only the apotheosis of prejudice, it is an obfuscation of the important issue upon which the churches, and religious people generally, should be aligning themselves. To an extraordinary and tragic extent it has deflected the interest and energies of men from what should be the one big interest of religion—the war against evil, the realization of an ideal human life (in Christian phrase, the Kingdom of God) on earth.

With the spread and improvement of education, it is gradually becoming less easy to exploit human credulity; and the churches are perhaps already repelling more people than they are attracting by their efforts at indoctrination. However that may be, an impartial observer, watching their rivalries in religious education, comes soon to see that all indoctrination is wrong. We are justified, of course, in teaching what we believe to be true, even if we are actually mistaken. But in all fields where there is no consensus of intelligent opinion, and especially in religion, where there is nothing remotely approaching a consensus of opinion, honesty demands that we hand on our beliefs tentatively.

that we emphasize our evidence rather than our assurance, and that we encourage our pupils, or listeners, to examine the matter for themselves. Mental wariness, the habit of mistrusting people's say-so and looking for their evidence, is one of the greatest and one of the rarest of virtues. We must offer our children with eagerness the best ideas we have, but we must train them at the same time to be critics of that best.

The word *faith* has caused much needless confusion. There is a sense in which faith means faithfulness, as when we speak of keeping the faith. To stick staunchly to what we believe to be right, in the face of temptation or obloquy or persecution, is a noble virtue. There is a sense in which faith means hopefulness; and this too is a valuable human attitude. To have faith in one another and in ourselves, faith in the victory of the right and the coming of the Kingdom of God, is not necessarily to blind ourselves to any facts, and it may give us added energy and a legitimate joy. But faith in the sense of credulity, believing where we have not evidence that should legitimately convince us, biasing our intellects by our desires or our will, is at best a dangerous self-indulgence and at worst disastrous folly. For it is such gullibility on the part of the people that provides a field for the dogmatisms of religious teachers, and turns religion from a blessing into a bane.

Faith is not a means of discovering truth, it is, in its bad sense, a complacent contentment with a comforting belief which is retained without being subjected to the proper tests of truth. If personal consolation is the end of religion, there is much to be said for thus making our judgment blind. But if the war against evil, the elimination of injustice and cruelty, hatred, lust, and greed, if the establishment

of righteousness, of a reign of peace and good will to men, the fulfilment of the dream of the brotherhood of man—if these are the important ends of religion, what religion needs is more knowledge, more intelligence, more wisely directed and keenly criticized effort, rather than more assent to traditional doctrines, more conformity to inherited and respectable teachings, or more of the faith that soothes and hushes doubt. For it is doubt, questioning, criticism, free and fearless thinking, that lead to truth and progress in any field, not an obstinate clinging to what it is pleasant and inspiriting to believe.

The dominant tendency of American religion today—perhaps in part by reaction against the grimness of Puritanism—is to be Pollyanna-ish, to consider evil as somehow good for us, or as actually non-existent, mere "mortal error." "God's in His Heaven, all's right with the world." This complacency is natural to a people whose prosperity is unexampled, whose standard of living is the highest and whose educational system is the most extensive the world has yet seen. But the religion of the great prophets prodded men rather than soothed them. Our civilization is still ruthless, and our prosperity conceals many injustices. We have yet a long way to go to create a genuine Brotherhood of Man. We do not want "gloom and doom" prophets, but we do need to realize that all is *not* right with the world, that the task of Christianizing the world is hardly more than begun.

What About Missions?

When we speak of Christianizing the world, however, we should think first of our own immediate world, rather than of the "heathen." In the picturesque phrase of Jesus, we should concern ourselves less with the motes in other

peoples' eyes than with the beams in our own. It is an arguable question whether the average American leads a more or less moral life than the average Chinese or Japanese or Hindu. In any case, it behooves us to establish a juster moral order in our own land before presuming to tell other peoples how to live. That is always a matter for the most expert intelligence and tact, requiring a sensitive sympathy for alien traditions and modes of thought. The average missionary, bred in his particular and very parochial world-view, is apt to be rather unfitted for such a task.

It is difficult to appraise accurately the missionary enterprise of Christendom. At its worst it has been a sort of Prussianism in religion, insufferably patronizing, cocksure of the finality of its particular theological views, thrusting down the throats of its converts doctrines which they will sooner or later have to regurgitate. At its best it has brought material help, ministering love, and shining examples of noble living, such as are an inspiration to any community. In general, it may be said that the indoctrination has been an evil, the moral inspiration and material help a good. But it may safely be said that if the many millions of dollars lavished on missions had been spent in educating the youth of these lands to become leaders in developing their own civilizations, the world would be far better off today. For there is much that is excellent in the traditions of all these non-Christian peoples; and some of them, at least, have almost as much to teach us as we them. A civilization is usually best developed along the line of its own traditions; to tear people away from these roots is often to commit what Robert Louis Stevenson called "soul-murder."

Without attempting to strike a balance between the benefits and the evils of missions, we may drive home our warn-

ing against the latter by quoting from a recent magazine article in which a writer well acquainted with the situation in Korea sums up his judgment:

> The doctrines taught and received by the Koreans with the most docile confidence, are inhospitable to many even of the elementary teachings of modern science. . . . The shock to the Korean mind, as it realizes Korea's need of the varied modern sciences and as it comes into contact with the intellectual currents of Christian society, is bound to be staggering. How far an intellectually quickened Korea will or can retain its Christian faith is a very serious question. Certainly the doctrines promulgated by the missionary policy so far pursued must be in large part discarded, just as they have been discarded by Christian civilizations which have utilized the findings of modern science and its principles of social organization. The transition in Korea will prove the more tragic since the discovery must be made by the people sooner or later that the Christian teaching first given them deliberately turned them away from light which was already abroad, and that their missions promulgated doctrines as fixed and final which were already generally repudiated by the civilization the missionaries were credited with representing.[1]

The fault here is the same as that which has been the curse of religion in all ages, the familiar human sin of dogmatism, of supposing that our particular brand of opinion is the final truth, and impressing it upon the minds of credulous people by emotional means—by telling them, perhaps, that they must believe it to be "saved"—rather than

[1] Quoted by J. E. McAfee, in *The Christian Century* for Oct. 27, 1921.

developing in them a critical spirit towards the difficult problems of cosmology and religious history and acknowledging that these problems have, anyway, no logical bearing upon the life of the spirit.

What About Our Sectarianism?

It is this same perennial human failing which has led to that sectarianism which is the scandal of Protestant Christianity. Better, indeed, this sectarianism, with its clash of rival opinions and the cancellation of its mutually contradictory tenets, than a great orthodox Church imposing its cast-iron creed upon all Christendom. But after all, the Church exists to fight against evil, to bring a truly moral order into human life; and a divided church cannot effectively undertake that enormously difficult task. There is much duplication of plant and resources, much waste of effort, much loss of prestige. Present denominational lines have, for the most part, ceased to have much serious living meaning, being the echoes of earlier controversies which have little interest for the world of today. But there are powerful denominational bodies and other vested interests that stand in the way of union. As a recent writer puts it, nothing is more difficult for a church than a graceful euthanasia.

The tendency of the times is undoubtedly toward church-union. But it is better that such union should not be premature. For the churches are not yet, for the most part, clearly conscious of their proper function in society. And there is grave danger that the creed of an amalgamated Church, adopted by a majority vote, may still impose barriers upon the intellect, checks to freedom of thought. Church-union will proceed upon a sounder basis when the progress of enlightenment has reached the point where a majority will

vote for complete freedom of opinion—an absolute divorce between the teaching of the Christian way of life and all theological doctrines whatsoever and all partisan interpretations of history.

What Is the Task of the Church?

Many churches seem to think that merely adding to their membership is their end and aim, not realizing that this is only their *opportunity*. The point in having members is that they may be Christianized. It is a pretty poor advertisement for the churches that they have so many millions of members and so few that are really Christian. People who do not practise the Law of Love, who do not treat other people, of whatever race or nation, as brothers, may be very interesting and, in other ways, valuable people. But they are not Christians, in any legitimate sense. The policy of no nation, of no social class perhaps, has ever been, by and large, based upon Christian principles. The point is not that men fall into temptation, it is that they do not seriously *try* to be Christian; it is not even their honest ideal, their actual working principle.

Christianity has suffered terribly from the futile hope that salvation can be effected magically, by giving assent to certain beliefs or adopting certain sacraments. There is no short cut to being a Christian; the only way is to *be* Christlike in one's daily life. And for most people that requires continued effort and vigilance. Emotional revivals and spectacular conversions have their place. But the Church has evidently not yet learned how to do its job well, for it has succeeded hitherto in really Christianizing only the relatively few. Perhaps human nature in general is too selfish and passionate, and the Church's job of Christianizing it is hope-

less. But at least that *is* its job. And with all the resources of modern psychology at its disposal, it is highly probable that it could do that job a great deal better than it is now doing it. It is partly a matter of opening people's eyes to the possibilities of life, making them fall in love with high ideals, partly a matter of will-training, partly a matter of "learning by doing." We have only begun to conceive a scientific religious education; the churches, if they can outgrow their theological opinionativeness and concentrate on their real task, may yet put the stamp of Christ upon our selfish and greedy world.

Consider this indictment of our morals from the pen of a native of India:

> What bewilders the alien observer is not the occasional aberrations of the Christian nations but their habitual conduct and organization; not their failures but their standards of success; not their omission to live up to right principles but their insistence that wrong principles are right. Your religion is a noble if paradoxical creed, which affirms that all men are brothers . . . that the way of service and self-sacrifice is the way of happiness. [But] the normal condition of your social order is an economic civil war, which you hardly take the trouble to conceal. Your industrial system involves the regimentation of the masses of mankind by a few thousand rich men . . . who quite frankly regard their subjects as somewhat rebellious and inconvenient instruments of production. . . . Your creed is exalted but your civilization is a nightmare of envy, hate, and uncharitableness.

This quotation could easily be paralleled by a hundred others. It expresses perhaps the dominant attitude of non-

Christian civilized people towards Christendom. And there are many born and bred in Christendom who share this disillusionment. The following excerpt from a private letter to the author is typical:

> Why do such men (and I assure you they are far more numerous than is generally supposed) leave the Church, as I and many others within the circle of my own acquaintance have done? They do so because of the awakening in them of what is called "the social conscience.". . . It is to me as though the souls of men were beginning to hear the voice of Jesus from across the centuries saying "and if thou bring thy gift to the altar and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar, go and be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift."

We must not too sweepingly condemn the churches; some of them have an honourable record of service in the cause of brotherhood. But when a man takes seriously the injustices in our industrial order, the selfishness in our business world, the graft in politics, do people say, "There is a real Christian!" No, they are more apt to say, "He must be a socialist." Or some other sort of a crank. When a man is fired with an ardour for peace and good will towards all men, and abhors the cruelty and hate and futility of war, is he recognized as a Christian, or is he, more likely, looked upon askance as a "pacifist" and a traitor? Most church-people have never thought of Christianity as the sort of thing that should be moralizing our industrial and political order, that should be abolishing war. And it often seems that the more orthodox people are, the less keen and challenging their social vision is apt to be.

A Christian minister recently wrote as follows:

> Whenever I am in a group of radicals or even liberals I am uneasy at their surprise that a minister should be interested in the causes dear to them, individual liberty, industrial fair play, peace. Somehow they have come to take it for granted that ministers and the Church don't really care much about the issues of today. They are not counting on any considerable help from the Church to break the power of privilege, secure the release of political prisoners, or maintain freedom of opinion. They do not expect the Church to demand justice for the West Virginia miners, the I. W. W., or the clothing workers. My uneasiness in the presence of my radical and liberal friends gives place to deepest anxiety when I remember that in the past four years I have seen no less than ten of my personal friends, all of them young men of a high order of ability, give up the active ministry. By diverse paths they have all come to the same conclusion that the Church will do little to bring about a just social system.

It is not the intent of the present writer to disparage the work and influence of the Christian churches; on the contrary, he has often urged in print and on the platform that men of good will stand by the Church and help to make it the great force for righteousness which it could be.[2] But there is crying need to fight against the self-centred sentimentalism that thinks of religion as essentially a matter of personal consolation and emotional experience. Such a religion is not fit for a democracy. Righteousness is essentially a social thing, as the earlier discussions in this book should have made clear. And only when the relations of

[2] In my book *Shall We Stand by the Church?* (Macmillan, 1920), I have discussed at some length all the problems touched upon so hastily in this chapter.

man with man, and of groups of men with groups of men, throughout the world, have become honest, peaceful, kindly, and just, can the churches rest content.

The Federal Council of Churches—perhaps the most promising development of American Christianity—has already many times, during its brief existence, put its weight decisively upon the side of public righteousness. But always with fierce opposition from those whose interests or prejudices were involved. In 1924 the Federal Council sent a communication to members of Congress expressing its conviction that it would not be a Christian thing for the Government of the United States to terminate arbitrarily an agreement with Japan without friendly conference, that all of the Church's talk about international morality and brotherhood would be rendered sterile if it were to acquiesce silently in a proposal which would give needless affront to a friendly nation and practically regard a treaty as a scrap of paper. This communication was regarded as highly impertinent by several of the Congressmen, one of them writing that he had read "with resentment and indignation" that a church-body had "presumed to advise" him "in relation to a purely secular matter."

To this the General Secretary of the Council replied:

> Our feeling is that this legislation runs counter to the efforts of the Churches to maintain social justice. [The Council] regarded the immigration proposal "with resentment and indignation," just as you do their action. As I get the trend of public opinion it means that Christianity is to be applied more and more to these great public moral questions, rather than to remain in vague abstractions. Many of the people feel that the weakness of the Church has been because it did not

> exert its influence more directly in affairs of social brotherhood. What is the use of proclaiming justice unless you can apply it to concrete cases? . . . The leaders of the Church are tired of preaching justice in theory and closing their eyes to injustice in practice.

It is of course no new thing for Christian churches to express their convictions with regard to questions of public morality. There is always, in such cases, a danger that a church may be, collectively, wrong about some moral issue. But for individuals or groups of men to renounce the active attempt to embody their moral ideals in the texture of industrial, political, and international relations because of the possibility that they may be mistaken in their judgments, would be to close the door upon moral progress. A degree of humility is wise, but not to the extent of paralyzing all effort. This great dynamic force, religion, must not be allowed to run to waste.

> Try to be really Christian in business and you may discover the Cross to be no longer an antiquated symbol, but a present-day reality. Face the vested interests of your own town, the owners of wretched house property, the sweaters, the men who live by the shame of women, the publicans, all who grind the face of the poor, and you shall know the fierce joy of being persecuted for Christ's sake. Attempt the stupendous task of making the message of Christ a reality to people of another race and civilization, try to Christianize international relations and interracial contacts, and you shall find that there is enough to call forth the entire energies of a full-blooded manhood and womanhood. . . .
>
> This demand for adventure will not be satisfied until the religion we practise is something like the religion

we profess, until we are applying it to the most difficult questions of modern social life, as well as in our private lives and in our homes. But when we do this we shall rediscover the glory of the Christian faith. It will be something for which we are glad to live and something for which we shall be willing, if necessary, to die.

CHAPTER XVIII

RACE PREJUDICE

Is Race Prejudice Inevitable?

THAT keen critic of contemporary civilization, Mr. H. G. Wells, has recently come to this conclusion: "I am convinced myself that there is no more evil thing in this present world than race prejudice, none at all. I write deliberately—it is the worst single thing in life now. It justifies and holds together more baseness, cruelty and abomination than any other sort of error in the world."

Race prejudice is not the only root of these evils; their underlying cause is often economic jealousy. There is little prejudice against the American Indians, because they are not economic competitors of the white men. But, as Mr. Wells says, race prejudice serves to justify these evils in people's minds, and sustains them. The Japanese are a very law-abiding and deserving people; the wretched treatment which has been accorded them in the Pacific States, though due primarily to economic rivalry, would not have been possible had not the jealous whites stirred up racial antipathies.

In the case of the negroes, race prejudice has been intensified not so much by economic rivalry as by the low cultural status of most of the blacks. Or perhaps we may put it the other way, and say that the repugnance felt towards people who are dirty and coarse and uncouth is intensified by the

difference in colour and physiognomy. Whites who have seen many negroes of that sort almost inevitably generalize and think of the blacks as inherently dirty and disagreeable.

Race prejudice is not innate. It is a product of special conditions in a community or in an individual's bringing-up. Children if uninfluenced by their elders will associate freely with other children of all races, without any repugnance or feeling of superiority. In many parts of the world there is no colour line. In Mohammedan countries whites and blacks mingle without consciousness of difference. In Latin America, from Mexico to Patagonia, the negroes and native Indians have intermarried with the whites to so considerable an extent that the racial problem is evidently going to be solved by the method of the melting pot. In the United States the negroes, once slaves, and still for the most part poor and uneducated, form a group sharply distinct from the whites, and regarded by them as obviously inferior. But indeed, the average native white North American thinks of his race as superior to *any* other. Upper class children come to think of the Irish as servants and policemen, of Italians as fruit-dealers, of Chinese as laundrymen, and so on. Race prejudice here roots in class prejudice. There is no country in the world where race prejudice runs so high as in our own, excepting unhappy South Africa, where the blacks outnumber the whites five to one, and the various other lands where white men rule over backward races.

Race prejudice is almost always developed in childhood; it is a needless and unhappy complex, like the fear of snakes or of the dark. But once implanted it is, like these other phobias, extremely hard to root out. Certainly the very essence of Christianity is the doctrine of the Brotherhood of Man. But the Christian Church has been much less effective

than Mohammedanism in extirpating these antipathies; and we must not count on it too much in the near future.

More effective, perhaps, would be scientific teaching of ethnology in our schools, showing the relative insignificance of racial differences and the recency of white supremacy. We have, to be sure, little knowledge of average racial differences as yet. But what we do know is that these average differences are small as compared with the differences between individuals in the various races. This negative knowledge is something; there is little, if any, scientific foundation for our assumption of the superiority of the white race to all others, much less for the myth of "Nordic" superiority.

But this will not be enough. We must give attention to the specific causes of racial friction and antipathy in specific cases.

The Negro Problem in America

Race-prejudice is working grave injury to the negroes in America, by withholding from them various privileges and opportunities open to the whites. Indirectly, it is injuring the whites almost as much; for the welfare of the two races is inextricably interwoven. It behooves us, therefore, to study this specific situation, in order to discover the aggravating causes of this particular prejudice.

To the present writer it seems probable that the mitigation of this particular race-tension will wait on several developments. The blacks must first, as a group, become reasonably well educated and prosperous, so that their average of cleanliness and refinement will be approximately equal to that of the whites. It is, however, to a considerable extent the fear of black supremacy that is standing in the way of their education and prosperity, so that we have here a vicious

circle. We must go deeper. In the sections where the blacks are numerous, we must somehow, while giving them their due political rights, avert the danger of black rule over whites. And we must banish the fear that the blacks will mate with the whites and make the American race of the future mulatto.

The political problem is the crux of the situation. In the regions where blacks outnumber whites, or even where they are numerous enough to hold potentially the balance of power, it is natural that the whites should dread the possibility of black rule. Thus, through the State constitutional amendments which prevent illiterate blacks from voting, through poll-tax laws, through the browbeating of voters and electoral frauds, the negro vote is, for the present, rendered negligible. From Southern papers we learn, for instance, that

> "The Butts County [Georgia] board of registrars met this week to purge the list of coloured voters." In Columbia, South Carolina, negro women were prohibited from registering, after having been required, as a test, to read, not the Constitution, but "sections of the civil and criminal code of South Carolina," and to "explain" them. In Jacksonville, Florida, registration officials said they had sworn out five hundred warrants, to be served on election day, for negroes who had begun "flooding" the registration offices.

The result is that few negroes vote. In the northern States about twenty-five per cent of the population vote, in the Southern States about ten per cent. In Jefferson County, Alabama, for an example, recent figures gave 800 negroes as voting, out of a population of 121,000.

As the negroes become literate, the States will find it harder to disfranchise them. Hence there is a widespread effort in the South to keep them illiterate. In some regions of the South only a tenth as much is spent per capita on negro education as upon the education of the whites. Recent figures for the United States as a whole showed that negro children, who constitute about eleven per cent of the total number of children, had two per cent of the total school-funds spent upon them.

The negroes can not, however, be long kept illiterate; it is, indeed, of great importance that they, in common with all other Americans, should be educated, not only as a matter of justice, but for our common welfare. A mass of uneducated citizens is an intolerable economic burden and a menace to the civilization of any State. As they get educated they will demand the right to vote, and that right can not legally or morally be withheld. What then?

Perhaps the best way to lessen the tension between whites and blacks would be to introduce a system of Curial Representation, such as is in use for the native Maori population in New Zealand. By this system whites would vote for whites, blacks for blacks. A fixed proportion of black officials would be elected, including certain executives regularly conceded to them, and a fair proportion of representatives in the legislatures. This would give scope for political careers to the negroes, insure a hearing for their interests, and remove the fear of negro rule from the whites. There would no longer be any political motive for browbeating of the blacks or withholding from them educational opportunities. Human nature being what it is, some such plan may be advisable at the present stage of the negro problem. If the acute race prejudice of our day vanishes in a more

civilized future, such a plan would no longer be necessary. But at least as a temporary expedient it has much to recommend it.

The majority of our States forbid intermarriage of blacks and whites. There is no scientific evidence that such interbreeding of races is bad from the biological point of view. All civilized races are hybrid. But socially, it is, in the United States, very bad. Mulattoes are not accepted as whites, and are often rejected by the blacks as well. Degeneracy is common among half-breeds, not for any biological reason, but because of their unusually unfavourable environment. According to the laws of heredity discovered by Mendel, an admixture of negro blood may lead to the birth of an obviously negroid child in some future generation, even though its parents are so light as to pass for whites. Such a situation is tragic. The vast majority of whites in our country will not tolerate the prospect of having any of their descendants mulatto. Can anything be done to lessen this fear, so productive of antipathy and injustice?

As a matter of fact, the number of marriages between blacks and whites has always been very small. The mulattoes are mostly due to illicit intercourse of white men with negro women. As the negroes get more prosperous and self-respecting (and perhaps we may add, as the problem of sex-life in general gets more satisfactorily solved), this miscegenation will presumably decrease. Indeed, it is already less than it once was; the number of light mulattoes has decreased. Let illicit unions of blacks with whites be penalized; let blacks and whites both develop a strong public opinion against it; let the leaders of the negroes make it clear that they do not want intermarriage; let the mulattoes grad-

ually merge with the negro race; thus one great source of racial tension will be lessened.

Is the enforced segregation of the two races desirable? In the present state of race feeling in this country there is much to be said for it, as a safeguard against friction and miscegenation. According to this policy the negroes would have their own zones in cities and towns, and entire villages. They would evolve a group-life of their own, a negro culture which would contribute something perhaps of distinctive value to the life of the nation. There need be no very great injustice in this; the whites would be as strictly prohibited from living in the black zones as the negroes from living in the white zones. The negroes would have their own doctors, lawyers, ministers, schools, libraries and shops. Thus every vocational opportunity would be open to them, in proportion to their numbers, and there would be nothing to put upon them the badge of an inferior race.

But such a policy can be carried through upon one condition only. The negroes must be given *equally good* opportunities in every respect. Otherwise there will be an increasingly bitter resentment at the injustice, as the negroes grow in race-consciousness and self-respect, and it will be impossible for the two races to live side by side in amity. The black zones in the cities must be not merely slum districts, but must include neighbourhoods as desirable as those occupied by the whites. If separate railway cars and waiting-rooms are insisted upon, they must be equally clean and convenient. And negroes who can afford it must not be barred from pullmans or dining-cars. Equally good schools must be provided, in proportionate numbers, and with equally well paid teachers. Equal treatment before the law must

be guaranteed, and whites who mistreat blacks must be punished as severely as blacks who mistreat whites.

As it is, we are far from giving the blacks these elementary rights. They are often cheated or insulted without redress, brutally treated by policemen, considered as the guilty parties in any fracas with the whites. Their schools are in most parts of the South scandalously inadequate, their travelling accommodations wretched.

> Did you ever see a "Jim-Crow" waiting-room? Usually there is no heat in winter and no air in summer; with undisturbed loafers and train hands and broken, disruptable settees; to buy a ticket is torture; you stand and wait and wait until every white person at the "other window" is waited on. Then the tired agent yells across, because all the tickets and money are over there—
>
> "What d'ye want? What? Where?"
>
> The agent browbeats and contradicts you, hurries and confuses the ignorant, gives many persons the wrong change, compels some to purchase their tickets on the train at a higher price, and sends you and me out on the platform, burning with indignation and hatred!
>
> The "Jim-Crow" car is up next the baggage car and engine. It stops out beyond the covering in the rain or sun or dust. Usually there is no step to help you climb on, and often the car is a smoker cut in two, and you must pass through the white smokers, or else they pass through your part, with swagger and noises and stares. Your compartment is a half or a quarter or an eighth of the oldest car in service on the road. Unless it happens to be a through express, the plush is caked with dirt, the floor is grimy, and the windows dirty. . . .
>
> It is difficult to get lunch or clean water. Lunch rooms either don't serve niggers or serve them at some

> dirty and ill-attended hole in the wall. As for toilet rooms—don't! If you have to change cars, be wary of junctions, which are usually without accommodations and filled with quarrelsome white persons who hate a "darky dressed up.". . .[1]

Conditions are, of course, not always anything like as bad as this; and with the general rise in the level of civilization in the South, they are automatically becoming better. But the attitude revealed by such experiences as that above cited is unhappily common. "The petty indignities to which the negro population is subject in many parts of the South show how undeveloped the sense of human equality still remains. . . . There is a widespread effort to keep the negro in a position of inferiority; and to justify this injustice, there is a continual stream of abuse poured upon him, to prove that the discrimination is deserved." So long as negroes are treated in that spirit, so long there will be a negro problem. In fact, the problem is chiefly that of persuading the whites to treat their black neighbours with justice and kindness.

The Japanese-American Problem

By contrast with the eleven million negroes in the United States the hundred and twenty thousand Japanese seem negligible. But they nearly all live in the Pacific States; and their presence there has provoked considerable fear and animosity among the whites. They have an extremely high birth rate, and their numbers, though still relatively small, are rapidly increasing. They are law-abiding and loyal, industrious, sober and frugal, and of high mental capacity. They are as averse to intermarriage as are the whites, and

[1] From a report of personal experiences by a negro woman, published in *The New Republic.*

form communities of their own. There is some unpleasant talk about their manners and morals, but that is largely propaganda, intended to justify discriminatory treatment. In any case, the younger generation, going to American schools, and growing up as American citizens, are adopting pretty generally, for better or worse, the manners and morals of America. The only real trouble is economic: they work hard, accept low wages, live on next to nothing, save their money. Thus they were able to buy up thousands of acres of agricultural land, which they carefully tilled and made very profitable. This aroused the jealousy of the whites.

Two steps were taken: the immigration of Japanese was entirely stopped—as that of the Chinese had been, years before; and they were forbidden, in the Pacific States, to own or lease land.

The Johnson Immigration bill of 1924 included a flat prohibition of the entrance of aliens ineligible to citizenship. Because of the pre-existent situation, and the failure to confer with the Japanese government, the Japanese people, with good reason, felt themselves humiliated and insulted. But this is now past history, as is our earlier breaking of a treaty with China; the question of the exclusion of Orientals must now be discussed quite apart from a consideration of the needless and inexcusable discourtesies that have marred our adoption of that policy.

To the present writer it seems an evident blunder of the most serious sort to have admitted to our shores people of any other race than our own. The Australasians are showing a profounder wisdom in their policy of a white Australia and New Zealand. It is not that we are of superior race; it is, on the contrary, because our people are so permeated with prejudice and racial jealousy. We have treated the

native Indians badly, we have treated the negroes badly, we are treating the Japanese on our shores badly. If more Asiatics were to come here, we should treat them badly too. This would be not merely an unhappy state of things here, it would be a cause of friction with the peoples of the Asiatic countries whence they came. In the interests of world-amity and peace, it is essential, in the present state of human morals, to minimize the number of cases where large groups of people of different races have to live side by side. The present law, which permits the entry of ministers of religion, professors, students, government officials, and merchants engaged in international trade, with a sojourn of six months allowed to travellers, but prohibits further immigration of Orientals, seems entirely wise. The Oriental countries might well erect similar barriers against the immigration of whites and negroes. But of course there is no tendency of immigration from West to East, while millions of Asiatics would certainly pour into America if the bars were taken down. The negro problem is bad enough; let us not have another problem as great.

On the other hand, the land laws of the Pacific States are unjust and vicious. The California law, which has been held constitutional by the Supreme Court, forbids "aliens ineligible to citizenship" to purchase agricultural land, to lease it, or even to make crop-contracts; they cannot even be guardians of the real estate belonging to their minor children. Some thirty thousand Japanese have had to give up the ownership or lease of land and become mere day-labourers. Such treatment is radically unjust, and is naturally the cause of resentment among the Japanese here and among their kinsfolk in Japan. Since most of these Japanese are here to stay, it would obviously be a matter of policy,

not to say of elementary justice, to give them—and the few other Asiatics—the same rights that we give to all other aliens in our country.

This situation will right itself in a generation, however, even if the land laws are not repealed. For the American-born Japanese are American citizens. The really grave danger for the future lies in the movement to deny the right to own land to American citizens whose *parents* were ineligible to citizenship. If such a law should be declared constitutional an intolerable situation would be created, the condemnation of a specified group of American citizens to a sort of permanent outlawry. For "parents" could in time be changed to "parents or grandparents," and so on! A far better way would be, while excluding further immigration of Orientals, to grant the right of naturalization to those who are already here. Thereby the discriminatory land laws would be automatically nullified, and no further injustices of that sort would be possible.

The Immigration Problem

With respect to immigration we are maintaining at present a threefold attitude: exclusion of Orientals, a sharp limitation of immigrants from Europe, western Asia, Africa, and Australia, with specified quotas permitted from each country, free admission from all countries of the western hemisphere.

The writer has already stated his approval of the exclusion of Orientals. How about our present attitude towards European immigrants? Shortly before the War well over a million a year were pouring in, of whom a steadily increasing number, amounting finally to 80%, were from southern and eastern Europe. The average quality of the immigrants had fallen in marked degree from that of earlier years.

Grave evils had arisen from this unrestricted immigration; and public opinion in this country now overwhelmingly supports the policy of drastic restriction.

Certainly there are *people* enough in our country. The natural birth rate will give us a huge population in another century, quite apart from immigration; and it will not be so very long before we shall be facing the problem of overpopulation. Meantime, it is no relief to the countries already overpopulated to have the outlet of emigration. Italy, for example, has been sending a vast stream of emigrants to the New World for a generation and more, and is today more heavily overpopulated than ever. The only relief for the densely populated countries is intelligent birth control; and it might as well be undertaken now as later.

In several ways the almost unrestricted immigration of the generation preceding the War has wrought us injury. The majority of immigrants of that period were unskilled labourers of low cultural status, docile in the hands of ruthless employers, willing to accept low wages and poor living conditions, hard to organize, and thus a tremendous drag upon the efforts of the more intelligent workers to improve their standard of living. Since the War not a few owners of factories, mines, and the like, have again been clamouring for greater supplies of raw labour. With the selfishness and shortsightedness which have so marred the development of American civilization, they think in terms of their own immediate profit. For the country as a whole, this relatively incompetent labour is expensive. The endeavour of all patriotic Americans should be to hasten the time when there shall be no illiterate, servile, unskilled labourers, in need of constant charity, swelling the ranks of the unemployed, tools in the hands of unscrupulous poli-

ticians and captains of industry. The importation of cheap foreign labour has caused, and would again cause, a serious retardation of our advance to a higher level of civilization.

True, the dirty and dangerous work of the world has to be done. But we cannot forever be importing ignorant and servile labourers from Europe, we cannot forever shirk the effort of finding a permanent solution for the problem. The ultimate solution, obviously, must be to lessen the unpleasantness and dangerousness of such work, to use machines wherever possible instead of hand labour, and wherever hazards cannot be eliminated to compensate for them by a high level of wages and an adequate system of insurance, so that self-respecting Americans will be willing to undertake such work. Again we must say, there are *people* enough here to do all the work. When more hands are imported, more mouths are imported. The need is not for more workers, it is for humaner working conditions and a humaner standard of living.

Any one who walks about our cities, rides in the subways, and visits the homes of the poorer people, can see for himself how the immigrant flood of the past generation has lowered the cultural level in America. The earlier immigrants, almost wholly from western Europe, were mostly people of a relatively high cultural status, and of unusual initiative and energy, who dared the hardships of a pioneer life, fired by the vision of a freer and better civilization. From them the "older American stock" is descended. The recent immigrants have been largely lured by hopes of making easy money; they have read the glowing write-ups of the steamship companies, have seen their well-dressed former compatriots returning on visits, have heard that every one in America is rich. Their fares are often paid by relatives in

this country; it requires no special energy or initiative for them to come. Over here they live in more or less segregated groups, content with a level of culture below that which we have hoped to make standard in America. Their children are only partially Americanized; it is largely from among them that our criminals and delinquents are recruited.

Worse than that, the *average* mental capacity of these later immigrants seems to be distinctly below that of the earlier comers. There is little scientific information on this point, certainly not enough to warrant the generalization that the peoples of southern and eastern Europe and western Asia are, as a whole, lower in average mentality than the peoples of northern Europe. But we have obviously been getting in these later years no longer picked men and women, of resolute will and high ideals, but to a considerable extent the restless, the incompetent, those who have not been able to "make good" at home. These newcomers are, for the most part, very fertile; they have not learned to practise birth control, and are swamping us with their children. The declining birth rate of the older American stock is doubtless due in some measure to economic competition from these immigrants, who are willing to live on a lower level than Americans are willing to accept for themselves or their children. The result is that peoples of rather low-grade stock are to an alarming degree *replacing* the older stock as well as adding themselves to them.

The present law has brought down the net increase of alien population to 268,000 in 1925-26 and 284,000 in 1926-27. The quota system is based on the principle that the people of a given nationality are usually "assimilated" through the people of their own nationality who have already

become "Americanized" in their ideals and standards of living. Avoiding invidious methods of discrimination, which might hurt the feelings of the nations discriminated against, it actually keeps out masses of eastern Europeans and western Asiatics, while giving comparatively little check to English, German, and Scandinavian immigrants. The result of the law so far has been not only to reduce the number of immigrants but to improve their average quality.

But after all, considerations of nationality, or of race (within the general field of the white race), are of little importance. Considerations of cultural status and standards of living are more important. But what is supremely important is the physical soundness and mental capacity of those who enter. The only really sensible basis for admission to our country would be to admit only those who are biologically *superior.* In the long run, what matters is whether we are raising or lowering the physique and the mentality of our population. There is no particular reason why we should admit 500,000 a year, or 100,000, or *any* immigrants —except for wives, children, or parents of people already admitted. But a small number of immigrants carefully selected by physical and mental tests, at the consulates in the country of origin—the tests to be checked up, of course, on arrival—would be a boon to us. All immigrants who fall below the average level of Americans in physique or intelligence are a distinct and irreparable injury to the America of the future.

To adopt such a plan would be to get away entirely from race prejudice and national prejudice, which are irrational, and to think in terms of the qualities of individual human beings. We must remember, too, that in the long run it is not the acquired characteristics of the individual that mat-

ter most—his education, his ideals, his "character"—it is his racial qualities, the characteristics that will be inherited by his sons and daughters.

It is quite irrational that we should still permit unrestricted immigration from the other countries of our hemisphere. There are fifteen million Mexicans and fifty million Latin Americans farther south; their numbers are rapidly increasing. Already hundreds of thousands have entered, and more and more are coming every year. Many of these are of very low cultural status, many seem to be of low mentality. Why should we admit millions of these people, many of them less desirable than the Europeans we are barring out? There is no adequate reason. We must either put an end to immigration entirely—which would be a perfectly legitimate and rational thing to do—or we must follow two principles alone: keep out entirely such races as will not, in time, become assimilated with our own, i.e., the non-white races; and admit of the white people who wish to come only those shown by careful tests to be of superior human stock, irrespective of the place where they were born. Most such people will already be of fairly good cultural status, and those who are not will be so few as to be easily educated to American standards. It will be essential to have registration of aliens and deportation of those who illegally slip in. Such a plan is not the expression but the negation of race prejudice, and could be resented by no foreign people with reason.

CHAPTER XIX

WAR

What Are the Results of Modern War?

THE gravest of all the moral problems now before the world is the problem whether it will ever be right again to go to war. Here, because of the intensity of the passions aroused, and the age-long habit of glorifying war, it is singularly difficult to apply the rational criterion of the greatest human happiness. But here, because of the momentous issues at stake, we must be particularly careful to remain cool-headed and free from emotional bias. We must consider dispassionately the results likely to be achieved by possible future wars and ask whether we can legitimately expect that going to war will ever again further the best interests of mankind.

We can probably agree that most past wars have been futile and disastrous, but that there have been occasions when it was best that a nation should defend itself in battle. In most cases it is extremely difficult to know what would have happened if one or both of the peoples concerned had refused to fight. If our forefathers had not fought England for their political independence, or if the North and South had refused to fight over the Secession issue, would our people be better or worse off today? No one can surely

say. But when the Athenians held back the Persian hordes at Marathon, or when Charles Martel defeated the Saracens at Tours, the world was undoubtedly benefited thereby.

What we may fail to realize, however, is that war has become a totally different thing from what it used to be. Until recently civilization was developed in relatively small oases surrounded by hordes of barbarians who looked with hungry eyes at the rich lands and possessions of their more prosperous neighbours. But now the most powerful nations are among the most advanced; there is no longer any need of defending civilization against savagery. The need now is rather to protect backward peoples from the greed and insolence of the civilized. Guerilla warfare in the old style may recur, for some time to come, between natives and imperialistic rulers. But real war, in the modern sense, takes place between civilized peoples; and it is such warfare that we must discuss.

Now the plain fact is that the destructiveness of war has been multiplied a thousandfold in the Twentieth Century, and is increasing in geometrical progression. What we call the Great War killed, in something over four years, not far from twenty million soldiers, and indirectly caused, first and last, the death of about twenty million other people. But the technique of war has been improving rapidly since 1918. A fleet of airplanes could now practically wipe out the population of a great city in a night.

The financial loss caused by the Great War has been estimated at about three hundred billion dollars; the cost of living was doubled even in the United States, which had fought for only a year and a half; in Europe it was trebled, quadrupled, and more. Thirty billion dollars' worth of property was destroyed; over three thousand good ships,

of more than fifteen million tons, were sunk; thousands of towns and villages were destroyed; economic processes were disorganized for a generation; the very limited world-stocks of copper, platinum, oil, and other valuable resources, were consumed to a very alarming extent.

The total sum of human agony caused by that war was so vast that the imagination can no more grasp it than it can grasp the figures of modern astronomy. But if there are wars in the future they will be carried on increasingly behind the battle-lines, and whole populations will suffer, in all sorts of terrible ways. "If mankind does not end war, war will end mankind."

Out of a great number of corroborative statements from the pens of military experts, the following must suffice; it is written by the Rt. Hon. Winston Churchill, former First Lord of the British Admiralty:

> All that happened in the four years of the Great War was only a prelude to what was preparing for the fifth year. The campaign of the year 1919 would have witnessed an immense accession to the power of destruction. Had the Germans retained the morale to make good their retreat to the Rhine, they would have been assaulted in the summer of 1919 with forces and by methods incomparably more prodigious than any yet employed. Thousands of aeroplanes would have shattered their cities. . . . Poison gases of incredible malignity . . . would have stifled all resistance and paralyzed all life on the hostile front. . . . The campaign of 1919 was never fought; but its ideas go marching along. In every army they are being explored, elaborated, refined under the surface of peace; and should war come again to the world it is not with the weapons and agencies prepared for 1919 that it will be fought,

but with developments and extensions of these which will be incomparably more formidable and fatal. . . .

As for poison gas and chemical warfare in all its forms, only the first chapter has been written of a terrible book. Certainly every one of these new avenues to destruction is being studied on both sides of the Rhine [and, we may add, in countries far from the Rhine], with all the science and patience of which man is capable. . . . A study of diseases—of pestilences methodically prepared and deliberately launched upon man and beast—is certainly being pursued in the laboratories of more than one great country. Blight to destroy crops, anthrax to slay horses and cattle, plague to poison not armies only but whole districts—such are the lines along which military science is remorselessly advancing. . . .

Mankind has never been in this position before. Without having improved appreciably in virtue or enjoying wiser guidance, it has got into its hands for the first time the tools by which it can unfailingly accomplish its own extermination. Death stands at attention, obedient, expectant, ready to serve, ready to sheer away the peoples en masse; ready, if called on, to pulverize without hope of repair, what is left of civilization.[1]

This brief glance must suffice as a summary of the direct effects of modern warfare upon human happiness. But when people read and talk of past wars they seldom think much about the murderousness, the wanton destructiveness, the nastiness, the horrible suffering, the setback to civilization. Wars are seldom thought of in terms of the killed and mangled combatants, or in terms of the beaten side, with

[1] Published in a *Bulletin* of the Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America.

its misery, demoralization, and despair. Nor is the tyranny of the conquerors usually stressed, the looting, the rapine, the crushing of liberty that is apt to follow the intoxication of victory. Instead, we think of the splendid heroisms, the devoted comradeships, the dogged perseverance and self-denial, and the eventual glorious success of the victors.

The heroisms of war are very real, very pathetic, and very glorious. But at what a price are these virtues fostered! The most important qualities in the soldier are absolute obedience, and ferocity—the will to attack and kill.

> The demonstrations of Colonel R. B. Campbell, Director of Bayonet Fighting for the British Army, were very instructive. He would take a platoon of sheepish-looking, poorly developed youths, and, by the exercise of his extraordinary persuasion, rapidly strip away the coverings of civilization from them, and turn them into fighting animals, eyes glaring, teeth bared, trembling, hating. He did not yell, or rant. He talked rapidly, evenly, in a low, confidential, compelling tone. "That's where the liver is, if he runs away. Two inches of steel, no more. . . . And mind you get the right place. . . . In the throat . . . right there . . . two inches. A-a-a-h-h. . . ." At the word the boys charged down on the row of stuffed sacks, stabbing madly but not blindly. As they lunged together the yell went up. . . . "A-a-a-h-h.". . . —a snarling, bestial sound that struck at the jelly of the spine.[2]

As an ex-soldier wrote in 1920, "You have got over your squeamishness. Yes, but it is just that 'squeamishness,' that recognition that the other fellow is also a man, which is religion, brotherhood, morality, and civilization."

[2] From an article in *The American Mercury.*

When a war is over, the heroisms of battle come to an abrupt end. The callousness persists. Usually a crime-wave follows. The ex-soldiers are restless, insensitive to suffering, longing for pleasure at any price. People generally do not want to think, they want to forget; there is usually a moral slump, a tired acquiescence in graft and privilege and profiteering, and distaste for hard work. Intellectual dishonesty has been fostered by the war-propaganda, hatreds and resentments colour thought, open-mindedness and a scientific attitude toward international problems is harder than ever to secure. The interest in progressive social movements, diverted by the war, is very slow in reviving.

> In March or April of 1914, a group of us held a dinner one night at the St. Denis Hotel for some social cause or another—I forget what. But one thing I remember, and that is that Walter Rauschenbusch was our speaker, and that he said words that only a prophet could have uttered.
>
> We are told, he said, that we must be patient, content to move slowly, must bide our time: Rome wasn't built in a day! Don't believe it, he cried. We have not a moment to lose. If we are to do anything, we must do it quickly. Now is the hour—perhaps the last hour for us of this generation. For any moment—tomorrow, the day after—a war may break out, and then our chance will be gone. The world will revert on the instant to reaction, autocracy, perhaps to barbarism and savagery. We shall then have to fight, if we can fight at all, not for progress, but for the elemental things which we think achieved forever. But nothing is achieved when war comes. Everything goes! The ground quakes, then caves in beneath our feet. So it's now or never! Once America gets into war with Mex-

> ico, Japan—he did not mention Germany, as I recall—our enemies will be in the saddle, to ride roughshod for years.
>
> It was as though a Jeremiah spoke that night! The war came within less than half a year, and with it, just as he prophesied, the ancient abominations. Rauschenbusch saw quickly this doom come down upon us, and died from the sorrow of it. Perhaps his fate was happier than that of those who survived to see their hopes destroyed and their life work at an end.[3]

It is primarily, of course, the young men who are killed in war—though it is quite possible that in another great war whole populations will be indiscriminately slaughtered. In the war of 1914-1918 the principal belligerents lost from a quarter to a third of their young men of fighting age. This means an incalculable loss in forward-looking, progressive thought. "What leaders the new age has lost on the battlefields of Europe, what genius, what power of social organization, what spiritual idealism, we shall never know. But that loss is telling upon us today in the political arena to which we have now returned, and will tell increasingly, making our national and international decisions more unrepresentative alike of the men who died and of the ideals which, at least in the earlier stages of the war, they thought they were fighting for."

No one can estimate the loss to science, invention, and art from the death of gifted young men, like Rupert Brooke, like Alan Seegar, like the young Englishman Mosely, of whom Millikan writes that he

> had accomplished as notable a piece of research in physics as has appeared during the past fifty years.

[3] J. H. Holmes, in *The Survey Graphic,* Vol. 10, p. 550.

> Such a mind was one of the early victims of the world-war. He was shot and killed instantly in the trenches of Gallipoli in the summer of 1915.[4]

War under modern conditions kills primarily the physically and mentally fit, the finest specimens of manhood, while the weaklings, the morons, and the defectives remain at home to breed at will. Any great war has, therefore, a marked dysgenic influence, lowering the quality of the human race on both sides, whichever technically wins. This loss is irreparable.

Would Anything Justify War Under Present Conditions?

The indictment is terrific. Could anything justify us in joining in such an orgy of murderous destructiveness as war has now become?

Every intelligent person agrees that aggressive war on the modern scale would be unspeakably wicked. The difference of opinion arises with respect to defensive war. Suppose that some great Power were to make unjustifiable demands upon us, threatening, if we refused to comply, to compel us to do so. Should we be justified in going to war with that Power in "self-defence"?

To answer this question intelligently, we must consider the probable results of non-resistance, and compare them with the probable results of war.

Certainly it is no longer true, as it was in the old days, that we may need to go to war to protect our men from slaughter or slavery, and our women from rape or abduction. Incidental atrocities might be committed by an unresisted foreign army of occupation, but they would be insignificant

[4] R. A. Millikan, *The Electron*, p. 196.

as compared with the atrocities of even a few days of modern warfare. It is inconceivable that any nation now powerful enough to invade and hold the territory of another civilized nation would order its army of occupation to murder, plunder, or destroy property, if the occupation was not resisted. The great mass of every nation are rather kindly folk, who would not stand for cold-blooded brutality, unless their fears and passions were aroused by *war*. It would be impossible to hush the matter up, as is possible sometimes with brutal treatment of remote and uncivilized peoples. If the people whose army was pursuing a policy of wanton destructiveness were kept in ignorance of the facts, the horror evoked in the rest of the world would quickly bring pressure to bear upon them. . . . In short, it is *war* that makes atrocities. If we wish to save our people from physical suffering and death, and our cities and countryside from destruction, we must refuse to go to war, however provoked or ill-treated we may be.

Under modern conditions social order would not be destroyed by a foreign army of occupation, if there were no war. The French occupation of the Rhineland and the Ruhr has produced some incidental cruelties and injustices—natural enough, in view of the deep resentments following a bitter war fought on French soil; but these are negligible as compared with the evils which resistance by the Germans would have brought. In general, life has gone on as usual in the occupied provinces. Life would go on as usual in our country if it were occupied by the armies of a foreign Power; our cities might well be better governed by it than by our own politicians. What the invading nation would desire would be money, or natural resources—coal, iron, oil, or whatever it was in need of. To pay such a tribute

would hurt our pride; it would rankle as an injustice (for, whatever the facts in the case, the great majority of us would never believe that we were in the wrong); it would humiliate us in our own eyes. But so far as hurting our pocketbooks is concerned, the amount we should be called upon to pay would be far less than the cost of even a very short war. For war has become incredibly expensive.

It is conceivable that the invading nation might wish to hold our territory under its flag, and thus destroy our political independence. This is extremely unlikely, in the case of continental United States, which is too big a mouthful for any Power to digest. But Porto Rico or Hawaii might be taken, or the Panama Canal, or the Philippines, if we were still ruling them. And in the case of a country not so powerful or so protected by the seas as our own, some neighbouring nation might harbour a lust for expansion at its expense. To be sure, the nations of the earth, with the exception of Russia and the United States, have solemnly covenanted together never henceforth to take by war the territory or infringe the sovereignty of any other nation. But suppose the nation threatening invasion disavows that promise, or is thoroughly distrusted, and suppose the League of Nations seems impotent to enforce the solemn covenant, so that a nation believes that it faces the loss of part of its territory, or the loss of its political independence. Is it justified in going to war in the hope of thereby averting such loss?

What a "war of self-defence" means, under modern conditions, is a war to avert the payment of tribute, or the loss of political independence, or of a portion of territory. The alternative would be, paying the tribute or accepting the partial or complete loss of independence or territory for the

time being, and trusting to the force of public opinion throughout the world to remedy the wrong in time. To choose this latter alternative would make against deep-rooted traditional attitudes—the love of political liberty, the sense of "national honour," pride in the flag, the instinct of combativeness. But education could develop contrary traditions, if a serious attempt were made. It is conceivable that a revival of fundamental Christianity might make masses of men as unwilling to fight, on religious grounds, as the Friends were in the late War. It is conceivable that a generation brought up on such books as Wells' *Outline of History* should care more for the peaceful development of civilization than for the perpetuation of their own national name or existing boundaries. It is conceivable that a generation of people enlightened as to the horrors of war should repudiate that barbarous and suicidal method of settling disputes and, appealing to the moral verdict of mankind, should be actually "too proud to fight."

If the majority in every great nation were thus to become truly Christian, or in any other way internationally minded, or merely pacific out of a realization of the horrors of war, the problem would, of course, be solved. But such a happy consummation cannot be counted on in the near future. And the question is, if any one powerful nation may possibly become so jingoistic or greedy as to threaten another nation, should all the nations practise "preparedness" and plan to join battle if invaded? Or should the more pacific nations take the lead and set an example to the others by disarming and pledging themselves under no circumstances to go to war? For unless such antecedent pledges are made and disarmament is effected, it is futile to suppose that a pacific

policy could be made to prevail under the excitement of threatened invasion.

It is difficult to forecast the future. But the present writer has come, after much study of the matter, to the conclusion that disarmament and abstinence from military resistance has now become the right course for every nation, irrespective of what other nations do. It seems to him unlikely that any nation henceforth will be able to invade and do any great damage to another civilized nation in cold blood, if that nation refuses to go to war. There are too many decent people in every nation to support such a policy, if it is not overlaid by the passions and the propaganda that war would bring into being. If such a policy *were* initiated, it would presently collapse under the double weight of opposition at home and the combined moral reprobation of the rest of the world. Furthermore, it is very doubtful if the occupation of another nation's territory by armed forces would pay. Strikes and sabotage, the flooding of mines and the wrecking of trains, and the thousand possible interferences with successful exploitation of a conquered land could easily make the invasion an economic failure for the invaders, without armed resistance.

"New occasions teach new duties." The writer agrees heartily that up to the present decade in the world's history there *have* been situations so intolerable that war, as it was then waged, was preferable. And he joins in giving all honour to the brave men who risked and gave their lives in what they deemed the cause of liberty and human rights. But the scales have now been tipped in the other direction. The danger to mankind is now far greater from military "preparedness," with the fears and suspicions thereby

evoked, and the temptation to use the diabolical engines of destruction and the carefully wrought plans which each of the great nations now holds poised like a sword of Damocles over its neighbours, than would inhere in a frank and honest policy of pacifism. The hereditary autocracies, which sometimes provoked wars for the sake of strengthening their grip on their own people, have now disappeared; and no nation now really wants war. Even so, it is too much to expect the European Powers to disarm at present; ancient fears and suspicions in that unhappy continent, so long war-ridden, will be a long time a-dying. But it is very unlikely that any people in the world will attack the United States, if we are clearly pacific ourselves. *We* may be tempted to make war against some nation that irritates us or infringes what we consider our rights; if we are well prepared for war, with a fine professional army and navy itching to show their efficiency, we may well be swept by a wave of misguided emotionalism into declaring war. We might or might not win it; no one knows what secret inventions, what gruesome methods of murderousness, would determine the outcome. But in any case we should be committing the unforgivable sin.

It is a matter of getting rid of outgrown attitudes and adjusting our minds to new situations. Preparedness for war *was,* till recently, necessary. Now it has become the supreme danger. The great Powers are like a band of children playing with dynamite. It is an expensive game; the great Powers are spending two or three billion dollars a year in playing it, right along. But this is nothing to what it will cost in a few weeks, or days, if the dynamite should go off. The only sane thing to do is to put the dynamite away and make friends instead of creating fear. *We* are in

the most favourable position for doing that first. Pride and ignorance stand in the way. For how long?

How Can War Be Abolished?

Nothing more imperiously demands our thought and our effort than the campaign to put a final end to war on earth. The supreme race of history is on; can peace be permanently stabilized before another great explosion occurs?

Education, of course, is the fundamental need. No nation stands to gain henceforth by a great war; victors and vanquished, they will all lose. That outstanding truth should be taught everywhere, together with detailed and vivid knowledge of the horrors of the new warfare.

In addition, we should offer such materials of education to our children as will increase their sympathy and sense of kinship with other peoples. Every one knows that we shall never go to war henceforth with England, or with Canada; we *feel* ourselves too much akin. It will be harder, but not impossible, to establish similar feelings of essential kinship with the other great peoples of the earth. More and more we must send our children abroad for study and acquaintance, and welcome foreign youth here. More and more we must organize international associations of every sort, and attend international conferences. More and more we must learn to love the art, the music, the great monuments and the natural scenery of other countries, we must come to admire their scientific and practical achievements. We must learn to think of all this as our common human heritage, and feel ourselves to be primarily members of the one great human race, battling its way against the forces of nature towards a glorious future—and only secondarily as Americans, Germans, Frenchmen, or whatever. We are now, on

the average, far behind some other peoples in such international-mindedness. We ought to be in the lead.

But this is only a beginning. We must diffuse an understanding of the causes of wars, and work with might and main to counteract them. We must further every possible device that bids fair to lessen the danger of war.

Probably the most dangerous thing in the world now is not lust for conquest, or desire for glory, or combativeness, but fear. We should work, by spreading pacifist sentiment among all peoples, by treaties and pacts like that of Locarno, by disarmament agreements, by strengthening the prestige and power of the League of Nations, to diminish this nightmare of fear, and thereby to lessen the danger that some nation, feeling the necessity of getting the jump on an evil-intentioned enemy, will strike the first blow.

Resentment at old wrongs, at some of the new frontiers in Europe which assign peoples against their will to a sovereignty they do not wish, and at the imperialism of the great Powers, persists, and may at any moment flare up into dangerous excitement. Such wrongs it should be the concern of the League of Nations to consider, and to remedy; all men of good will should help to educate world-opinion to that end.

The steadily increasing population in some countries which are already overpopulated is a serious menace, since such peoples naturally look for a bigger place in the sun. Emigration may serve as a temporary outlet; there are still countries, particularly in South America, that welcome immigration. But at best this is a temporary easing of the strain. The only real solution lies in restricting population, by educating the peoples concerned, raising their standard of living, and teaching them birth control.

There will still remain interested groups that may push for war—professional army- and navy-men, munition-makers, landowners and capitalists who welcome war as a backfire against democracy, merchants and financiers who may want colonial markets, raw materials free from tariff, concessions for exploiting natural resources, and the like.

This latter group is so dangerous to the world's peace that several changes in national policy should be made by international agreement; and we should work to that end. All colonies should be governed on the "open door" policy, with equality of trading opportunities for the merchants of every nation. All investment fields should be open freely to investors of every nation. All colonial preferential tariffs —such as we have put up at the door of the Philippines— should be abolished, together with all differential export duties. And above all, the nations should agree not to go to war to protect the investments made by their citizens in foreign countries, or to collect debts owed them. All this will be strenuously opposed by the financial interests which gain by the present system of "dollar diplomacy." But from the mere economic point of view all the rest of us would be better off. And we should be free from one of the gravest causes of modern war.

As to the munition-makers and potential war-profiteers, they can be completely undercut by a declaration that if another war comes, wealth will be conscripted. This means, or should mean, that in the event of another war, a pay-as-we-go policy will be inaugurated; instead of selling interest-bearing bonds to the rich, their money will be taken just the same, and they will be given nothing but receipts. If we conscript human life, we have a still greater moral right to conscript money. And it is right that a generation which

makes war should pay for it instead of passing a debt on to future generations. Nothing is more hateful than war-profiteers. And if it is definitely known beforehand, because of detailed plans drawn up and legally accepted, that no war-fortunes can be made, and that all existing wealth must be put at the service of the country's need, it is extremely doubtful if war will ever be made!

All of these changes will have to come, probably, by international agreement, as will disarmament. But there is no reason why we should not lead the way. We should be better off thereby, whatever other nations may do.

It is extremely important, too, that freedom of the press be guaranteed, even in time of war—except, of course, for the publication of military news that could help the enemy. All the nations were terribly misled by war-propaganda during the years beginning with 1914. If another war broke out, or were even threatened, we should again be flooded with distorted news. If we want to keep our heads and act intelligently, it is essential that every one should have access to all available facts.

Of course the likelihood is that, if the men at the head of our Government ever decide again to go to war, they will exercise complete control over the press, as in 1917, to "sell the war to the people." But at least now, while we are not hovering on the brink of war, the press, and other educational agencies, might be used by those who are in a position to affect their policies, to sell peace to the people. The conception of a steadfast and resolute peaceableness must be made popular.

An excellent idea, carefully developed by Kirby Page and others, calls for the establishment of a Department of Peace at Washington, parallel with the Department of War. Such

a department would carry on an educational campaign for peace, would seek out and make public the facts concerning the practices of our own citizens which seem objectionable to other nations and are therefore a menace to peace, and would in many ways foster international understanding and friendship. The preservation of peace demands the active interest and co-operation of every intelligent person; and that interest needs to be kept alive by incessant effort. This could be done for a fraction of the five hundred million dollars which we are spending annually on our army and navy—not to speak of the two and a half billion dollars a year which is what we spend altogether, for war past and prospective.

But our final word must be this: It is not enough to make people hate war, they must be made to love and enjoy peace. In other words, their daily lives must be made so interesting and colourful that they will not secretly prefer the risks and excitements of war. It is no secret that thousands of men and women had "the time of their lives" in the late war. And millions of others blindly and half-consciously welcomed its coming, because their lives were so hard, or monotonous or unsatisfying.

> On August 3, 1914, we waited to hear of war. If the members of that crowd waiting for war could have been honest with an inquirer, they would have had to admit that they wanted war simply because they wanted something new to happen. Their silence was a breathless hope rather than a breathless apprehension, a hope that the monotony of life was going to be broken.[5]

War, as an arresting magazine article has recently warned us, is "the explosion point for the discontents of peace."

[5] John Langdon-Davies, in *The Atlantic Monthly*, Vol. 138, p. 115.

> It is of no use reminding men of the sufferings of war, or that the next war will probably mark the end of civilization. They don't care. If they admitted the truth, they would say that they don't like civilization. War is a symptom of man's profound discontent with himself and his environment; and there will be no end to war until he himself has found peace.[6]

Science, education, religion, art, music, pageantry, sports —everything that brings comfort and joy into human life— in its measure tends to counteract the lure of war. Existing natural resources and technical knowledge are adequate for raising immeasurably the standards of living of the masses. To do so must be made a generally accepted moral ideal. "Materialistic," church-people will say; "Bolshevistic," conservatives will say. And meantime we drift toward God knows what future unrest, bitterness, and war. The old moralities have not banished war. Perhaps a morality which definitely prizes human happiness as the *summum bonum* will succeed where they have failed.

[6] I. A. R. Wylie, in *Harper's Magazine*, Vol. 154, p. 147.

CHAPTER XX

ISOLATIONISM

Is International Organization Necessary?

PRIMITIVE man lived in his particular valley or corner of the woods with little care for what lay beyond. Civilization has gradually expanded the human horizon, until the complex industrial order of today is world-wide in its articulation. Government, however, has not progressed as fast as commerce and industry; politically, mankind is still divided into a number of sharply separated States. Only within the last decade has a world-wide political organization taken shape, a mechanism for adjusting the clashes of interest between the nations of the earth, and for forwarding the solution of common problems.

American statesmen and idealists had a large part, and in the end a decisive part, in bringing to pass this great step in the integration of human purposes. But, partly because of local political antagonisms, and partly because of reasons which we shall discuss, the United States, to the dismay of the rest of the world, turned its back upon the newly created society of nations, and has continued to play a lone hand. Russia, too, for other reasons, stands outside the family of nations. But in spite of the failure of these two great States to co-operate, the Society of Nations has become one of the great factors in the world's life.

The greatest driving force that led to the creation of the League was the realization that the Great War had nearly

wrecked civilization, and the determination that such an orgy of hate and destruction should never recur. The steady increase in international relations of all sorts brings more and more chances of friction and discord. And although war would be folly for all concerned, there are many foolish people in high places. Preparedness for self-protection by armies and navies is becoming intolerably expensive, and is obviously a very uncertain guaranty of safety as well as a dangerous playing with dynamite. The individual nation ought not to have to protect its own sovereignty and property, any more than the individual citizen in a State ought to have to train himself to arms, and to carry weapons with him everywhere, in order to protect his liberty and his possessions. The individual State ought not to be free to make war upon another State at its own sweet will, any more than the individual citizen is free to shoot and rob another. Man cannot be called civilized until the society of nations is able to protect each of its members and maintain a stable peace.

The League of Nations has, for the first time in human history, provided such a mechanism for preserving the peace of the world. It is a permanent organization, ready to function at a moment's notice. It has a permanent body of rules and an accumulating set of precedents; it has won the assent of the member nations to a definite compact, which is fortified by "sanctions." No compact, no plan, no mechanism, can ever *guarantee* the maintenance of peace, in the face of turbulent, selfish, stupid human nature. To have a carefully thought out plan, a solemnly accepted covenant, a set of machinery ready for prompt action, is the utmost that *can* be done. Such a preventive mechanism has now been created. And there is ground for hope that it will really suc-

ceed in preventing such another tragedy as the world stumbled into in 1914.

Already the League has handled a number of cases of clash of interest between nations, in which war was threatened or actually begun. In the case of the Aaland Islands, in the case of the Vilna district, in the case of Silesia, in the case of various controversies between Balkan States, the League has effected peaceful settlement, with as complete satisfaction as can be expected when nationalistic feeling is aroused. Indirectly, by bringing together for periodic conferences the representatives of the various Powers, and thus creating the beginnings of an international mind, the League has led the way to agreements of the utmost importance for peace. It has launched on its already very valuable career the World Court, which two decades of effort had failed to create. It has published over seven hundred treaties, and thus brought the commitments of the various nations out into the open. For less than a decade's showing this is a good deal, especially with the richest nation in the world refusing to give its aid or even the prestige of its sympathy.

But it is not merely for the prevention of war that world-organization is necessary. It is necessary for the same reason that Big Business has become necessary, for the same reason that it was necessary for our country to have a Federal government rather than to remain a mere collection of separate States. All the major concerns of man have now outrun national boundaries. Problems of international shipping, of food supply, of the control of epidemics, of narcotic drugs, of the "white slave" traffic, of passport formalities, and the like, are being handled by conferences and by commissions under the auspices of the League. The permanent Secretariat, and the Labor Bureau, employ a considerable body

of people continuously upon matters of common interest and importance. All sorts of temporary emergencies have been handled by the League, such as the repatriation of refugees, the rehabilitation of the financial systems of Austria and Hungary, the supervision of areas like the Saar valley and Dantzig, where, as the result of the post-war treaties, nationalist feeling runs high and an impartial hand is needed. The rights of racial, religious, and linguistic minorities have been protected. In such ways the League has become a part of the routine of the world's life.

Moreover, it would be easy to enumerate a hundred ways in which it could usefully extend its activities. There are many problems of international concern that need decision. There are wrongs that need rectifying. And while all sorts of other organizations may be created for these varying purposes, the League has the great advantage of being a going concern. We must indeed recognize that with nationalistic feeling running as high as it does in our contemporary world, all international undertakings have precarious footing. An explosion *may* occur at any time which will undo the work that has been done towards mutual understanding and amity. But if present achievements are thus undone, there will be nothing for it but to begin patiently over again and rebuild the society of nations. For whether we like it or not, man has passed the stage when he can live in the isolation even of a national State; mankind has already become bound together by a web of interests, and that web is being woven closer every year.

What Are the Objections to World-Authority?

Looking at the matter from the point of view of world-affairs, our policy of standing outside this society of nations

seems extremely selfish and short-sighted. And it is so regarded by most of the rest of the world. What, then, are the reasons for our peculiar isolationism?

Undoubtedly it has its roots in our separation by the oceans, and in the development on our soil of a democratic form of government, and a democratic society, which were a revolt against the manners and customs which hardy men and women had crossed the ocean to escape. We were the New World, our ways were superior to the ways of the Old World. This superiority-complex has been fostered by our unprecedented prosperity, which was due partly to the great natural resources of a virgin continent, and partly to the harnessing up of mechanical power to a degree hitherto unknown. Our prosperity has been accentuated by the terrific losses of Europe during the War. . . . Our adventure in that war left us with a bad taste in the mouth. We were not long in beginning to wonder if it had been a mistake to get mixed up in the European mess. And we think, now we are out, we will stay out.

All this is quite natural and human. We are prosperous, we are self-sufficing. We think we have a higher civilization than the rest of the world, we think we have more common sense, and higher ideals. We think foreign diplomacy is sordid, foreign feuds sinister. We think we are righteous in our international attitudes, and we do not want to commit ourselves to any necessity of compromise with the lower ideals and grasping selfishness of other countries. . . . If we would only try, seriously, to see ourselves as others see us! The conceptions that other peoples have of us are largely tinged with envy for our prosperity and admiration for our great material achievements. But they are almost always tinged with impatience at our quite

unwarranted air of self-righteousness. Our politics are known to be corrupt, our business selfish, on a scale seldom realized elsewhere. Our brief international record is seen to contain six wars and a number of highly questionable episodes. Our refusal to participate with the rest of the world is looked upon as egotistical selfishness.

These motives and attitudes, on both sides, are important, and must be reckoned with. But we do not need to settle the question as to the relative level of civilization and ethical standards of the different nations. However different we are, and whichever is superior, we all have to live together in the same world. Just our financial investments in foreign countries, and the debts they owe us, constitute an entanglement which makes their doings of importance to us. As it is, we have only the clumsy method of interchange of diplomatic notes, and the private negotiations of bankers and business men. If we belonged to the League, we should have a seat on the Council, and should be in a position not only to talk things over across a table with the representatives of the other nations, but also to block by our veto action that seemed to us undesirable. Joining the League would not be, in itself, *entangling* ourselves in the affairs of the rest of the world; it would be a way of straightening out such entanglements as are bound, in any case, to occur.

It is common among isolationists to speak of it as a European league. But this is incorrect. It is a world-league, including practically all the American, Asian, African and Australasian nations. True, it is the European Powers that are at present, with the exception of ourselves, the dominant nations of the world. But that is a fact about the world, not a peculiar fact about the League. The Society of Nations has to take the nations as they are. Since we possess our

continent from sea to sea, the other nations with whom we have to live are (excepting Canada and Mexico) on the other continents. But the simple fact is that many problems have arisen and will arise which transcend the continents. War, on any large scale, anywhere in the world, now has its reverberations which affect civilized peoples everywhere. And the patient upbuilding of a code of international relations and obligations is a necessity for us all.

Is it true that joining the League would infringe upon our national sovereignty and interfere with our legitimate interests? Well, something over fifty nations, most of them as proud and patriotic as our own, have not found their sovereignty infringed upon. The League is not a super-state, it is a mechanism for conference and agreement between independent nations, a channel for doing business together.

A well-known American politician crystallized the thoughts of many of his countrymen when he said, "I object to the binding of this country to submit to arbitration any claim which any other country may trump up against it." (Note the superiority-complex betrayed by the phrase "trump up.") . . . Let us consider, then, to what we should have to bind ourselves by signing this covenant of the nations. We should be pledged *to submit all disputes with other nations* not settled by ordinary diplomatic methods *to arbitration,* either by the World Court, by the Council of the League, or by some board of arbitrators to be agreed upon. We already have arbitration treaties with many of the nations, so this would merely extend our present commitments. We should further be pledged *not to make war* upon the other nation *during the period of the arbitration conference* (for which six months is allowed), *or for three months after the report is made.* In a justiciable case (a

case which comes clearly under accepted international law or precedent), the decision may be made by a majority vote of the arbitrating body; in a non-justiciable case (i.e., a case which must be decided according to equity) the decision must be unanimous, or no verdict will be rendered. If a decision, then, is rendered, and the other party to the dispute accepts it, we should be pledged *to accept the decision and not to go to war* about it. If, failing a decision rendered, and accepted by the other nation, we should go to war, we should be pledged *not to destroy the sovereignty or take the territory of the other nation, if we should defeat it.*

Problems which are primarily internal to a nation, such as its immigration laws and tariff laws, whatever effects they may have upon other nations, are not subject to this compulsory arbitration. But if we were to plan to go to *war* with another nation because we disliked its laws or practices, the question whether we had a right to go to war with that other nation would have to be submitted for arbitration to some neutral body.

If *other* nations quarrel, and one of them breaks its pledge and makes war in violation of this covenant, the Council of the League is to recommend measures for bringing pressure upon the outlaw nation. These would consist primarily, and perhaps wholly, in economic measures; but they may also include a request for armed forces from member nations to stop the offending nation. . . . There is, however, no commitment whatever for us in this. For the recommendations for exerting pressure would have to be made by a unanimous vote of the Council, and we should be on the Council. They would, at most, be recommendations, or urgent requests, to which the member nations are not pledged to accede. And it is understood that, in any case, nations are not to be

asked to send armed forces to another continent than their own. So there is nothing in this which would embroil us against our wish in armed warfare.

All amendments to the Covenant, and all new legislation of whatever sort, has to be accepted by a unanimous vote of the Council. And as we should be on the Council, we need have no fear of the addition of further commitments in the future which we are unwilling to make. . . . We should, in fact, be, with the other permanent members of the Council, in this privileged position. All the other nations have pledged themselves to a Covenant which *may* some day be amended over their heads, in spite of their adverse vote. But there would be no such danger for us.

It comes down then to the question whether we do or do not believe in the compulsory arbitration of disputes between nations. If we do not, we should stop pretending to want *peace*. For so much restriction of the freedom of nations to do as they please is surely the very minimum prerequisite to lasting peace. We cannot have peace without paying a price for it. If we, practically alone among the nations of the earth (for Russia's exclusion from the League is due to other causes), refuse to submit our wills to the possibility of having our own way thwarted, are not the other nations justified in distrusting us? *Must* not *international* questions be decided, not as one nation alone wishes, but by the verdict of an impartial tribunal whose authority is accepted by all? What right have we, more than any other nation, to seek to impose *our* will upon the world? If the other nations are willing to submit to the verdict of an impartial tribunal even though that verdict make against their own interest or convictions, should not we too be willing? How can international life proceed except as all the nations agree to certain

rules of the game, and a non-partisan interpretation of the rules? No game can go on without the risk of a ruling by the umpires that will seem unfair to one of the participants. To accept such rulings, if they come, in a sporting spirit has been an American tradition in all games of skill; we are good sportsmen. But we are not good sportsmen in the one realm where, above all others, sportsmanship is necessary—the realm of international relations. We are not willing to "play the game." We cannot help participating in international affairs, but when controversies arise we wish to be free to decide everything in our own way. . . . Actually, we do not expect that. We have arbitrated a number of important questions and have engaged to submit other possible disputes to arbitration. But the root of our refusal to join the society of nations lies in the widespread dislike of putting ourselves in a position wherein we might be obliged to accept a decision unfavourable to our own interests. *We* are so great, *we* are so right in our judgments, so just in our conception of our deserts, that we do not like the idea of letting decisions get out of our own hands. We distrust the mental processes of other peoples; we think our own decision is more likely to be right than a decision by neutrals. . . . But if so, is not the rest of the world justified in saying that we have a superiority-complex, in vulgar parlance, a "swelled head"?

However that may be, it is obvious that there must be world-organization, and some measure of collective authority over the individual wills of the nations, in so far as those wills clash in any dangerous way. No clash of interests should be allowed to lead to war, in view of the horrors that modern warfare entails. No one nation can have its way in everything, unless the collective judgment of the world

approves it as the right way. We can see the necessity and the justice of that curb in the case of other proud and wilful nations. We must be willing to see that it applies to us as well.

Should We Join the Existing League?

We might admit all this, and yet believe, as some liberals do, that the existing League of Nations does not deserve our support.

An objection commonly made to the League is that, by pledging its members not to destroy the sovereignty or take any part of the territory of another State, it perpetuates present injustices, such as Italian possession of German-speaking parts of the Tyrol, or British possession of the Channel Islands, with their predominantly French population. Very few people are satisfied with the present political boundaries in Europe; many people believe that the rule by Europeans over Asiatic territory is unjust and should be ended. And of course, if we join the League we shall be pledged not to make further acquisitions of territory by war, as we did in the case of the Philippines and Porto Rico.

The answer to this objection is that the peace of the world has now become more important than any question of political jurisdiction or boundary. Rectifications of frontiers may be made by peaceful negotiation; an enlightened nation would not wish to hold in subjection peoples of another race and language who were bitterly opposed to their rule. Relinquishments will undoubtedly be made, as when Great Britain relinquished its sovereignty over Ireland, or when the United States withdrew from Cuba. We shall undoubtedly withdraw some day from the Philippines, and the force of events will doubtless compel Britain to withdraw from India and Iraq, France from Syria, and so on. But surely

experience shows that the hastening of such consummations is not worth another international war. Experience also shows that such a war would in all probability create new injustices if it succeeded in ending some of the older ones. In any event, no possible "rectification" of frontiers is going to please everybody. The questions involved are too tangled, the wishes of different nationalistic groups too hopelessly conflicting. No, if we allow wars for such ends, we shall have to give up our dreams of permanent peace. While with the nations pledged not to destroy sovereignty or take territory, the chief *lure* of war is removed.

At its inception, it was plausible to say that the League was a league of victors in the Great War, designed to perpetuate their power. But now it includes the late "enemy-nations," with Germany on the Council. It is true that, in limiting the member nations to peaceful activity, it perpetuates the various injustices of the peace treaties that followed the war. But those treaties are now a part of the world's law, and any possible league of nations would have to accept them as such. Whatever changes are made in them must be made by negotiation. And the League offers the best possible opportunity for the expediting of such negotiations. Moreover, the increasing prestige of the League, and the habit of meeting regularly under its auspices for conference, is engendering a certain measure of international-mindedness, which is the best possible augury for the eventual rectification of existing wrongs.

All sorts of objections have been made, of course, to this and that detail of the structure of the world-organization which the League has created. Some say that the Great Powers have too predominating an influence; others say that the Assembly is cluttered with representatives from too many

little States of no account, such as Haiti, Liberia, or Nejd. These two criticisms pretty well balance each other, the plan adopted being a compromise between equality of power among all the nations, great and small, and full control by the great civilized States.

Some say that the League should do much more than it is doing—abolish tariff barriers, set up a common coinage for the world, enforce disarmament upon all its members, and so on. Others fear the assumption of too great authority by the League, and seek rather to increase the local autonomy of cultural groups all over the world. . . . Obviously no conceivable arrangement would suit every one, conservative and liberal, aristocrat and democrat, nationalist and internationalist. The existing organization has emerged as the result of an enormous amount of discussion and compromise. It is the plan that has met with the acceptance of practically the whole world. It is open to unlimited amendment, as fast as the public opinion of the world can be aroused for change. But for the time being nothing better can be *got.* It is obviously futile to think that this elaborate organization, constructed with such infinite pains, will be discarded in favour of some other world-organization of a type that might please the United States better—even supposing that *we* could agree upon some alternative plan for a League! A world-organization cannot be created offhand, or be imposed by any one nation. The existing League was born out of the agony of the War, has been shaped by the brains of many peoples, and has now the momentum of successful operation for nearly a decade. Whatever the far future may bring, at this stage in the world's history it is the existing League of Nations or none.

What then? Shall we continue to turn our backs and let

the great decisions of international life be made without our voice and vote? As a matter of fact, a number of our citizens have from the beginning held important positions among the personnel of the League. The dispute over Memel was handled by an American, the refugee problem in Greece and Turkey was handled by an American, the financial reconstruction of Hungary was handled by an American, and so on. Americans have served on dozens of commissions and committees; the Librarian of the League has been an American. America has been unofficially represented by "observers" at various conferences. But we steadily refuse to pledge ourselves to the Covenant which the other nations have adopted, to pay a share of the expense of the world-organization, or to align ourselves officially as one of the family of nations. We are thus responsible for keeping the League from being a complete world-organization. So long as we keep out, its future is uncertain. For we are the richest of all the nations and in many ways the most powerful. Our influence has great weight in weakening the prestige of the League; and if it should collapse, the blame would very largely rest upon us.

Certainly if a serious international emergency arises, the League will be badly handicapped without our moral and material co-operation. The power relied on to make a truculent State behave itself is, first, the united public opinion of the rest of the world, and, secondly, economic pressure. But the effectiveness of the latter, certainly, depends upon its inclusiveness. If the United States feels free to let its citizens supply money and goods to the covenant-breaking State, its economic isolation, not to say its moral isolation, will be incomplete.

The various arguments against this or that aspect of the

League's organization motivate a few people here and there. But they are not the real reason for our refusal to join. There are equally good arguments against democracy, industrial civilization, and everything else to which we are committed. No human institution is perfect; if we waited till we had a perfect international organization, we should never have one. . . . No, the real reason is our proud and self-satisfied nationalism. One of our Senators expressed the heart of the matter when he said that we ought not to commit ourselves by signing the Covenant of the League, because if it came to fulfilling an obligation contrary to our interests, we should, of course, and ought to, do what was for our own interests. . . . Nationalism of that sort, however it may mask itself in high-sounding patriotic language, is just collective selfishness, which is the worst and most dangerous kind of selfishness.

There is a nobler kind of nationalism, the attitude that craves for one's country the honour of being among the foremost to co-operate, and to sacrifice, if necessary, for the common good of mankind. There is a great fund of such international-mindedness in this country of ours, which has manifested itself in the private effort and philanthropy of our fellow-countrymen. If the turn of political events had been a little different at the critical moment, we should now doubtless be among the foremost champions of the League. As it is, the longer we stay out, the less it seems like *our* league, and the more it seems like backing down to enter. Perhaps we shall have to await some decline in prosperity, some reverse, some more chastened mood, in which we shall see the value for ourselves of belonging to the family of nations. In the meantime we are accruing a good deal of distrust, resentment, and hatred, by our standoffishness, our

superior airs, together with the apparent determination of our Government to have its way, whenever any dispute arises with other nations. In Mexico, Central America, and the Caribbean, the American Big Stick has become a perpetual bugbear. Few Americans consider their country imperialistic; but everywhere abroad we are regarded as among the most ruthlessly imperialistic of the nations. Whatever be the temperate truth of the matter, our policy of isolationism bids fair to leave us morally, as well as politically, isolated from the rest of the world.

If we accept the view of morality which this volume has sought to expound, we shall agree that it is the *welfare of the world,* not the welfare of any one people alone, that must be the guiding principle of all activities whose effects transcend national boundaries. Nations are, after all, accidental groupings of people; if we think in terms of the interest of one such group alone, we become the victims of a "deification of geography." The more one comes to know people of different races and nationalities, the more one comes to see that "folks is just folks" wherever they may chance to have been born and bred. Christianity once dreamed of a "brotherhood of man"; and there have always been those for whom their fatherland is the whole earth. There is no greater need for human morals in our day than that they should overlap national boundaries, as nationalism has made them overlap the narrower boundaries that once seemed as final. The ultimate goal of "the new morality" is the greatest attainable happiness for all the peoples of the earth.

PART THREE

MORALITY AND THE FUTURE

These concluding chapters attempt to sum up our moral situation in general terms and to suggest some general attitudes that seem desirable.

CHAPTER XXI

CONSERVATISM AND RADICALISM

Conservatism vs. Radicalism

ALL the way through our discussion of contemporary moral problems we have been faced with the antithesis of those who want to maintain the *status quo* and those who want change. As Gilbert and Sullivan put it,

> "Every little boy that's now alive.
> And every little gal,
> Is either a little Conservative
> Or a little Liberal."

The conservative prizes order, stability, mental peace; he sees the values already attained by current practices and existing institutions, which crystallize the experience of many generations; his virtues are sympathy with the past, group-loyalty, steadiness, the ability to resist passing fads and aimless unrest. The radical sees that the existing order is far from perfect; he is the critic, the reformer, the prophet; he demands progress; his virtues are open-mindedness, fearlessness, a hatred of vested interest, privilege, prejudice, and inertia.

The maxim of the conservative, it has been said, is that nothing should ever be done for the first time. He dreads losing existing goods; he realizes how easy it is to destroy and how hard to rebuild; he sees that an imperfect order is

better than chaos. So he digs in his heels, lies down in his tracks, supports ancient injustices and outgrown superstitions. Where he has his way, we have an arrested civilization, as in the case of China for many centuries, or the Middle Age in Europe. Obvious evils are acquiesced in, innovation is looked upon as dangerous, morals and institutions are standardized, creeds and constitutions become sacred, "skepticism" and "heresy" are sins, the man with divergent ideas is an "infidel," a "traitor," a "red," a "Bolshevist," or whatever the current label of opprobrium may be.

But over against this evil of obstruction is the danger of blind destruction. The radical may fail to discriminate the evil perversions of an institution from the institution itself; he may be an irresponsible agitator, wilful, undisciplined, actuated by a mere personal restlessness or grudge. His romantic love of novelty, his inability to compromise, to accept what does not completely satisfy him, for the sake of finding a common basis for living with others, may lead to disorder and anarchy. Wherever there has been progress, it has been because of the presence of radicalism; but not all radicalism makes for progress; sometimes it makes for laxity, disruption, and ruin. The problem is, to distinguish good radicalism from bad, and to find the best blend of radical and conservative tendencies.

Looking at human history in broad perspective, we can hardly fail to be struck with the astonishing conservatism of the great mass of human beings. They have remained content with so much less than the amount of happiness they could easily have had! Morals, political and social institutions, practical inventions, have remained rudimentary, ill-adjusted to men's needs, with relatively little protest, year after year, century after century. What are the causes of this

apathy, this failure to correct what seem to us in retrospect obvious abuses and stupidities, this failure to reach out for goods that were within their grasp? A glance at these causes may help to correct them in ourselves. For we still suffer, in many ways, from a blind and senseless conservatism.

Why Are Most People So Conservative?

Perhaps the fundamental reason is that most people instinctively dislike manners, morals, institutions different from those to which they have been accustomed. Every tradition is essentially intolerant of other traditions. Practically every people has regarded all foreigners as inferior: to the Greeks all other peoples were barbarians, the Jews regarded themselves alone as the chosen people, the Chinese masses have looked upon Europeans as "foreign devils," one hundred per cent Americans speak of immigrants more recent than themselves as Chinks, Dagoes, Sheenies, and the like. In the Twentieth Century in these United States, a man who openly espouses an unpopular moral or political or economic ideal is looked at askance, if not actually persecuted. If a man even dresses in an unusual way (no matter how much more comfortable and appropriate), if he eats with the wrong utensil or in the wrong way (no matter how much more convenient), if he is "queer" in any way, he is ridiculed or reviled.

If this is so in our tolerant age, think how much worse it has been throughout human history! The Athenians of the classic period were almost unique in liking diversity, in realizing that individual variations make life more interesting and lead to valuable discoveries. Even among them there was, of course, violent protest against innovation—sufficient to cause the execution of Socrates. But for a brief

period men were unusually free to think for themselves, to say what they thought, and to act upon it. And that is, of course, the secret of their remarkable achievement. But such widespread radicalism was a new phenomenon in human history, and was not paralleled till modern times.

During the Middle Age men were sternly held to the accepted doctrines, and thousands were tortured and put to death for having heretical ideas. We have become more humane nowadays, and few of us take religious divergences so seriously; but our temper is not yet very different. It takes courage in our society to go against received ideas in morals; only a few leaders, like Bernard Shaw or Havelock Ellis, can retain general respect if their ideas are not "respectable." It has always been an instinct in communities to keep themselves united, by killing off or discouraging variations; and the instinct still persists. Many thousands of liberals accept this tyranny of respectability, because they feel the need of social approval or because they fear to lose their jobs if they are branded as radicals. Just so during the time of the Commonwealth in England multitudes aped a Puritanism in which they did not really believe, while under the Restoration, some months later, the fear of being called Puritanic led other multitudes to a looseness of living which they did not either want or approve.

For the most part, of course, it does not even occur to people that things might be done differently. Evils which are the result of maladjustment and human stupidity, or selfishness, are regarded as necessary misfortunes, and borne with pious resignation or stoic fortitude. When new ideas are broached, they do not fit in to the familiar framework of belief and practices; they are disturbing elements, to be summarily ejected in the interests of mental peace.

> The man or woman does not exist whose mind has not become so filled with accepted ideas of human beings and relationships before maturity, or even adolescence, that what is seen thereafter is chiefly a fog of creeds and patterns. If several hundred babies, children of good inherited backgrounds, could be brought up on an isolated island, without a taint of superimposed custom and never hearing generalizations about themselves—never having standardized characteristics laid heavily upon their shoulders, perhaps a different type of relationship founded upon actualities would be evolved. . . . As it is today, we do not know what the pristine reactions of individuals, free from the modifications of stereotype, would be like.[1]

In fact, thinking is, for most people, a painful and unusual process. Doubt is mental discomfort, uncertainty abhorrent. The acceptance of a new idea necessitates rearranging our minds—a laborious and, for the average man, distressing experience. The strength of conservatism is that it is a substitute for thinking; all that is required is to keep things as they are. The conservative resents being disturbed in his habitual mental outlook, he warns his children against being "upset."

Add to this widespread tenacity of mental habit the resistance to change on the part of those who benefit in some way by the *status quo*. There are vested interests in our social order, in politics, in the organized religious bodies, in boards of education, in every phase of human life. The upper classes, the well-to-do people, are usually conservative, by a sort of self-protective instinct. It is usually those who have little to lose who are radicals. This is not so much con-

[1] Florence Guy Seabury, in *Our Changing Morality*, p. 229.

scious selfishness on both sides as it is a result of the fact that those who fare badly feel the evils of the existing order, while those who are well off are not exposed to these evils, and, unless they are unusually thoughtful or sympathetic, are not sharply aware of the need for reform.

> Seldom does the new conscience, when it seeks a teacher to declare to men what is wrong, find him in the dignitaries of the church, the state, the culture that is. The higher the rank, the closer the tie that binds those to what is but ought not to be.

Even when such men recognize the existence of evils, they fear that the proposed remedy will be worse. One innovation may lead to another! If this step is allowed, what shall we come to next! The dread of untried ways, the fear of losing what they feel to be good, outweighs, in their minds, the flaws in existing institutions and codes.

One result of this conservatism of the upper classes is that conservatism is always a mark of belonging, at least in sympathy, to the upper class. Radicalism is thought of as, for the most part, a lower class phenomenon, and rather vulgar. Masses of people envy the rich and successful, imitate their manners and morals, and reproduce their ideas. So it comes about, as Thorstein Veblen has shown, that the views of the possessing classes have an influence quite out of proportion to their actual worth, or to the number in this class. To be sure, there are "parlor socialists"; but that derogatory term implies that by espousing such ideas an upper class person becomes déclassé, lowers himself, becomes a sort of traitor.

Another great force, that of organized religion, is usually on the side of the conservatives. The great prophets and founders of religions are, indeed, invariably radical in their

views, sweeping aside convention and upsetting people's complacancy with their demand for a better way of living. But as soon as religion becomes organized it becomes stereotyped; it is taken possession of by priests and rulers and made into a bulwark of existing privileges and practices. Every such religion has claimed the sanction of its gods for current conceptions of right and wrong; divergent ideas are choked off as sacrilegious. Investing its teaching with a claim of supernatural authority, a church has the best possible leverage for combating alien ideas. So, in general, the Christian Church, since the adoption of Christianity by Constantine, has been on the side of the established order, and has protected and perpetuated moral ideas which otherwise might have been discarded. To this day, moral education in Christendom usually means the teaching of loyalty to the biblical standard of morals, with more or less hostility to those moral ideals which were outside the horizon of the writers of the various documents now gathered into our Christian Bible.

In the time of Jesus the Pharisees were the good, orthodox, respectable, pious people. They were sincerely and naturally against Jesus—except for the few who came under the spell of his remarkable personality. In our day the spirit of empirical science, and of modern liberalism, has become sufficiently diffused to affect many of the most religious people. But we still have heresy trials, "fundamentalist" movements, and a bitter fight against the ideas and morals of "modernism." The most vigorous churches are, naturally, the ones which hold unquestioningly to the supernatural character of their creeds and codes, with Heaven or Hell yawning before them. To them it is a matter of supreme importance to fight the world, the flesh, and the devil—

which means, practically, to fight all ideas antagonistic to their inherited dogmas. It is possible, as some liberal religious movements have shown, to combine a zeal for the life of the spirit with open-mindedness and a free acceptance of modern knowledge. But it will be a long time, if ever, before the net influence of organized religion is to be counted definitely on the side of moral, social, and political liberalism.

Which is the Greater Danger for America Today?

In the pioneer days America was the home of radicalism. Ancient and hallowed ideas were discarded, assumptions unconsciously held and unquestioned in the old world were abandoned, men experimented with new institutions, improvised as they went along, and gave birth to a new civilization. Emerson gave expression to this creative impulse in many eloquent passages; "Why was man born, if not to be a re-former, a re-maker of what man has done?" A foreign visitor wrote, "The mission of the American people is a mission of renascence and renovation."

In some directions this spirit of inquiry and iconoclasm has gone steadily forward. In physical research and invention, in industrial and commercial organization, we have amazed the world by our progress; and we have blazed some new trails in literature, music, and architecture. But in social, political, and moral matters we have slackened our pace, until we are now among the most conservative of civilized peoples. Foreign observers are almost unanimous in reporting that our thought has become timid and our dread of innovation excessive. Our business men, our legislators, and our courts seem to be living in perpetual fear of radical tendencies. The Bolshevist régime in Russia, with

its ruthless uprooting of privilege and its communistic ideals, has been set up as a bugaboo to frighten us away from all change. So persistently misleading have been the reports inculcated concerning events in Russia that the average man over here thinks of those hard-working, worried idealists as a band of desperadoes and criminals.

It should be obvious to the most casual observation that we are in no slightest danger of a Bolshevist revolution, or anything of the sort; we are too successful, too prosperous. It is only decayed institutions or cruel tyranny that can be overthrown by radical teaching. In Russia the rotten political and social order of the Czars had completely broken down, and the land was in actual danger of reverting to barbarism. The Bolshevists were the only group strong enough to take the helm, restore order and security, and rebuild the national life. That their polity is strikingly different from ours should not disturb us; on the contrary, mankind will be the wiser for diverse experimentation in social and political institutions. Let us work out our salvation, and let Russia work out hers. We need not fear for our own type of economic order, so long as it works even moderately well.

We are in no danger whatever of political or economic revolution, at present. But our institutions are still far from having reached a permanently satisfactory form. Nothing could be more fatuous, or more sinister, than the current tendency, manifested in some quarters, to hold existing practices as sacrosanct and condemn honest criticism. We are free to scrutinize traditional methods in mechanics, in architecture, in medicine, in education; and our rapid advance in these fields bears witness to the fruitfulness of this free play of thought. Why, then, be afraid of criticism directed

upon our political methods, our economic order, our morals, our religion? Perhaps in these fields also we can make striking advances. Certainly this little book will have failed in its mission if the reader who has reached this point is of the opinion that there is, in these realms, no further improvement to be made!

A little knowledge of American history suffices to show that the present prevalent standpattism of our business men, and their servants the politicians, is sadly out of line with our earlier pioneering spirit.

> No doubt, much of this reactionary spirit is honestly deemed American by its possessors. . . . Any reformer who seeks to bring about, even by the most legitimate and peaceful means, better political or industrial arrangements is looked at askance by those who think that wisdom came to an end with the passing of their fathers. This complacency, this stubborn inertia, is, on the contrary, the most dangerous foe of the true American spirit, which has always been adventurous, forward-looking, liberative of new energies and a growing hope. . . . If Americanism meant the petrifying of our social order in Eighteenth or Nineteenth Century grooves, then, indeed, we should do well to turn to other creeds, or found a new tradition for ourselves.
>
> The fact is, however, that the dreams of our fathers, embodied in their memorable phrases, have never yet been more than half realized. It is for us to carry on the work of actualizing these dreams, of working out into practice what was for them a hope and an ideal. . . . Those fathers of ours had great courage and a clear vision of the road that leads to man's social salvation. But all they could do was to make a start. If we have caught their spirit we shall not sit still, content with their work. On the contrary, as our own poet

> wrote, "New occasions teach new duties"; it is yet a long task to complete the building of the ideal democracy whose foundation stones they laid.
>
> It cannot, then, be too forcibly said that our heritage is not a set of perfect institutions but a set of inspiring ideals. Just as Christianity for centuries has been hindered with superstitions and errors taken over from the Jewish and pagan faiths, and has had to struggle long to rid itself of these corruptions and realize its own ideal, so Americanism has been subject to all sorts of compromises and cloudings, and has never yet fully expressed itself in the general practice. No one of us is exempted from the task of scrutinizing our social and political life, to determine how far it truly reflects our avowed ideals, and how far it yet fails to do so. There is still need not only of devotion but of criticism; Americanism should be taken to mean not only what we actually have achieved, but what the best of us are trying to achieve.[2]

The American people lapsed after the Civil War into a lethargy with respect to social and political problems which lasted for a generation. At about the turn of the century a new spirit of progressivism began to arise. Under the vigorous leadership of Roosevelt new ideas became current, new programs were formulated, and some actual progress made. The Great War—the source of so many evils, the world over—

> left the American people emotionally and morally exhausted by efforts and sacrifices which they had been artificially stimulated into making for the benefit chiefly of their European associates. They have not been able

[2] Durant Drake, *America Faces the Future,* pp. 4-6.

since to pull themselves together for the accomplishment of any positive domestic purpose. They have for the moment lost contact with the social democratic idealism which is latent in their political tradition. They drug themselves with the idea that they are sliding downhill at the bidding of Manifest Destiny towards some Utopia of personal comfort.

Of course this period of inertia will also run its course and come to an end. Unappeased problems will gather behind the dam which the Republicans have erected against all progressive legislation. They will finally exercise sufficient pressure to compromise the safety of the barricade. Some successor to Bryan and Roosevelt who has gained the ear of the people will bunch the accumulated mass of legislative liabilities and take the stump with a popular progressive platform. In the meantime American public opinion will have recovered from the emotional exhaustion, the cynicism and the inertia which were induced by its sad adventure in Europe. The ordinary American will suddenly find himself tired of his own timidity and of the tedium of his recent behaviour. Then, but not until then, will come a revival of progressive politics in America.[3]

Early in 1926 a symposium was held in the pages of the *Survey Graphic,* to inquire what had become of the reformers and progressives of the early years of the century. Among the many interesting contributions space permits the citation only of the following sentences:

The liberalism of the last generation believed passionately in America as a country unique among the nations of the earth. . . . Its destiny was to be the fulfilment of the social visions of the ages. Here humanity was

[3] From an editorial in the *New Republic.*

> at last to find itself! If the liberals hated and fought the municipal corruptionists, the monopolists, the bankers, it was because these were despoilers of the dream. Then came the War—and America was seen to be just like every other country! . . . America is in for a long period of reaction; victories for the future must now be won elsewhere. But America will follow where we once hoped that she would lead, and thus find her place at last in the commonwealth of man.

American idealists are more and more looking abroad for encouragement and inspiration. The following passage from a recent (1927) book by an American authority on the history of education, is typical:

> Having grown up on the frontiers, I naturally feared the development of the intolerant community; and as naturally longed for the sort of community that would welcome new ideas and new forms of living. I had even assumed that America really wanted this sort of education; that she wanted her social and economic wilderness explored, as her physical wilderness had been explored; that she wanted to probe into the future and the unknown. I assumed that the schools had fallen behind the will and desire of the community; that the schools, having fallen into academic ways, were defrauding the American people, especially American children, of their rights and their essential desires.
>
> That I was mistaken in the assumption is now no part of my story. I merely add, in passing, that I now know that our schools are no whit behind the desires of the community, by and large. We have returned to the primitive folkway mind: We want our schools to maintain, defend and reproduce in the younger generation

[4] J. H. Holmes, in *Survey Graphic*, Feb. 1926.

> the vested mind and emotions of the passing generations.
>
> But, in Denmark, my faith in education was restored. I found there that the youthful mind could have its chance, and that the youthful mind, getting its chance, could dare to become intelligent in its own way, offering its own strength, its own new patterns of understanding and its own new insights into problems and needs, to the world worn down by the ignorance and the prejudices of the ages.[5]

Pessimistic these statements are, about America, and, let us hope, overdrawn. But certain it is that our present government (1927) is the apotheosis of complacent *laissez-faire;* our great newspapers and our popular magazines foster the notion that our institutions are the last word in human wisdom; our churches do relatively little to arouse zeal for any sort of social progress; the most brazen and widespread corruption in political circles, the most shameless profiteering and privilege among business men are tolerated, are hardly noticed. In welfare legislation we have long lagged far behind the progressive countries of Europe and Australia. In religion we amaze the civilized world with our fundamentalist traditionalism, our barbaric revivals, our Scopes trial and anti-evolution laws. In morals we scold the younger generation, we confront the prudish morals of Puritanism with the cheap cynicism of the sophisticated intelligentsia, with little serious attempt to think our problems through. In international relations we nag our Latin-American neighbours and hold aloof from international councils, so that Uncle Sam has become a byword among the nations, envied for his prosperity, admired for his

[5] J. K. Hart, *Light from the North,* Introduction.

material efficiency, but neither loved nor admired for his manners and morals.

Surely what we need is to be pulled out of the ruts where we have stalled. We do not want peevish faultfinding, or mere muckraking, or class antagonisms, or violence. We want ideas, we want reforming zeal, we want a vision of a better world than we have yet made. In certain periods of the world's history the dangers of radicalism may be terrifying. For us the danger now is of Babbittry, of being content with a civilization that is still in many respects ugly, dirty, greedy, ruthless, unjust. We want clearness of thinking, and a moral idealism to match our material progress and our commercial success. As Mr. Wells pithily says, "Satisfaction with existing things is damnation." We must conserve all that is good in existing institutions, we must cherish the lessons of the past. But after all, the best thing in our past was the spirit of growth, the passionate endeavour toward the realization of ideals. That spirit is still alive, here and there among our youth. We await the time when it will again blaze up, burn out the dross in our civilization, and bring us another step nearer the millennium.

CHAPTER XXII

MORAL PROGRESS

Optimism vs. Pessimism with Regard to Progress

By moral progress we mean the adoption in greater and greater degree of habits of conduct that make for the general happiness. The concept of Progress is almost wholly modern; the ancients looked backward rather than forward to a Golden Age; and while the Jewish prophets looked forward to the establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth, they expected it to be inaugurated cataclysmically, by divine interposition, in the face of an increasingly wicked world.

Probably the discovery of the facts of evolution has done a great deal in recent times to spread a belief in progress. But of course Evolution does not in the least imply Progress. We may properly speak of the evolution of morals in a given community, or in the human race as a whole. But this must not be taken to prejudge the question whether the later moral practices were better or worse than the earlier. As a matter of common observation, there have been periods of moral decadence as well as of moral progress; and the question whether there has been a net improvement in morality through the course of human history is one which it is not easy to answer. The mere fact of change proves nothing, as in the case of the negro who had accidentally brushed against a wasps' nest. Rushing headlong down the road, he was asked where he was going. Without stopping,

he ejaculated, "I ain't goin' nowhere; I'se just leavin' the place I was at!"

The belief in progress has become a sort of dogma in the West—or had become so before the War—quite replacing in the more modernistic circles the older dogma of the Fall. The East has been far less optimistic, the following quotation summarizing the contrast:

> The Japanese admiration for Western material civilization is by no means extended to Western morals. Oriental thinkers do not commit the serious blunder of confounding mechanical with ethical progress, nor have they failed to perceive the moral weaknesses of our boasted civilization.[1]

In Christendom we have pretty widely come to assume that as God's in his Heaven, all is going to be right with the world presently. Particularly in America, where so much has been accomplished in so short a time, where we have every year better buildings, better roads, better radios, better schools, it is natural to assume that we are having better morals.

Perhaps there was never another period so complacent with regard to morals as the Victorian Age. Of that age it has been said:

> The world was undeniably growing smaller and better. It was better at two o'clock than at noon, and better at a quarter after two than at two. . . . Humanity and human institutions were steadily growing better through an evolutionary process not dissimilar from that by which the anthropoid ape had lost his tail. He could look forward along a path of progress so well

[1] Lafcadio Hearn, *Glimpses of Unfamiliar Japan,* Vol. II, p. 676.

> engineered, with such perfect curves and gradients, that humanity could stroll along it, day by day, without consciousness of effort. Generations of respectable people, getting up at half past six or seven, breakfasting on coffee, rolls, and bacon, going to an office, coming home at six o'clock, bringing up children, not being conspicuously unhappy with their wives, tinkering, but not radically, with old ideas and old ways, were expected to lead mankind upward and onward towards the divine. . . . The Victorian did not feel at home in a world which retained the institution of war, and accordingly was convinced that wars were becoming less and less frequent, retreating to less and less conspicuous corners of the earth, and on the point of being whirled off altogether. . . . Ten million men have perished to prove that progress is not automatic, not comfortable, and not in any way a law of nature; even more, that there are dark forces that tear at the fabric of civilization as fast as it is woven.[2]

More recently, pessimism with regard to progress has come into fashion:

> If we all struggled bravely to the end of the Reformer's paths we should improve the world prodigiously. But there is no more hope in that *if* than in the equally plausible assurance that if the sky falls we shall all catch larks. We are not going to tread those paths: We have not sufficient energy. We do not desire the end enough: indeed, in most cases we do not effectively desire it at all. . . . Man will return to his idols and his cupidities, in spite of all movements and all revolutions, until his nature is changed. . . . Enough then of this goose-cackle about Progress.[3]

[2] From an article in the *New Republic.*
[3] Bernard Shaw, *The Revolutionist's Handbook,* p. 204.

> It is not too much to say that our whole system of society is rotten from top to bottom, and the Social Environment, as a whole, in relation to our possibilities and our claims, is the worst that the world has ever seen.[4]

> For nearly two hundred years the Western nations have made a kind of religion of what they call progress. There is, they hold, a natural tendency, or a divine purpose, that the world shall go on improving from year to year. . . . It is a secularized, but by no means a scientific, form of millenarianism. . . . The study of history applies a cold douche to this facile optimism.[5]

The Dark Side of the Picture

In face of these sharply conflicting judgments, what shall be our verdict? Certainly the matter is very complicated. There has been no straight line of progress, but every sort of change, for better and for worse. At best, progress is spasmodic, local, piecemeal, and interspersed with backslidings. Our situations are far more intricate than those of men in simpler societies; these new situations necessitate new virtues, and open the way to new sins. As people grow better in one way they may grow worse in another. Obviously there is no possibility of exact measurement in these realms, and any generalization is precarious. But this must be borne in mind: The fact that some groups of people in earlier times have been more contented than most people are today does not imply that they were more moral. Contentment means merely absence of dissatisfaction, it does not imply a rich and beautiful life. On the contrary, discontent

[4] Alfred Russel Wallace, *Social Environment and Moral Progress,* p. 169.
[5] Dean Inge, in *The Atlantic Monthly,* Vol. 135, p. 190.

is a far more promising state of mind than contentment, so long as maladjustments persist.

Perhaps most primitive and uncultivated peoples take morality more seriously than the majority of relatively sophisticated modern men. They usually look upon it as supernaturally decreed, and live in dread of dire punishment if they dare to disobey. The precarious situation of such peoples makes group-solidarity imperative; individual variation is ruthlessly stamped out. But while primitive reprobation and punishment of offenders against the code is apt to be severe, it is doubtful if, in most cases, the code was actually better obeyed. And on the negative side we must put the bigoted narrowness of these codes, the harshness of penalization, and the blocking of the way toward progress.

But there are many forces making against morality in our modern world. The great historic religions are, on the whole, losing their hold upon men's loyalties; and their slowly waning influence often involves the loosening of allegiance to moral codes. No one can forecast the future of religion; and it is extremely difficult to weigh the positive against the negative values of the various religions. But it is, at least, doubtful if the great religious organizations will ever again shape men's consciences and men's lives as thoroughly as for many centuries they have done.

The spirit of nationalism, which has to some extent superseded religious loyalty in men's lives, is a very dangerous substitute. It has given birth to sins against human welfare of the most serious sort. And it is quite within the range of possibility that it may lead to the complete undoing of civilization over wide areas of the earth. The rapid exhaustion of some of the most important natural resources,

and the increasing pressure of population, are also very dangerous in their influence upon human behaviour. The very size of our modern nations has made possible many forms of political graft and corruption which could not exist in smaller communities. And even worse are the forms of selfishness and greed that the industrialization of civilization has brought in. The distance between the owners of big business concerns and their employees makes it possible for them to ignore the injustices and hardships which their policies involve. And their distance from the consuming public makes it possible for them to get away with shoddy workmanship, adulteration, and profiteering, for which they would be sharply called to account if, as usually in primitive life, the makers of goods were personally known to the consumers.

In general, we live less in one another's eyes than in earlier days. In our modern cities, the individual can live as he pleases, with no one to reprove him, provided he is not caught in actual law-breaking. The mixing up of the various races and national groups, especially in America, and in the Oriental cities where East meets West, naturally leads to the loosening of traditional morals by the mutual confrontation of differing codes. The monotonous work in many modern factories and mills, which tries the nerves without tiring the body, engenders restlessness and a craving for excitement which has its moral dangers. Indeed, the increasing proportion of brain-work demanded in our modern world probably necessitates sharper moral control than outdoor manual labour, which drugs the mind and leaves the body healthily tired.

We must also realize that modern urban life offers many more personal temptations than the older village life. The

commercialization of vice, on a large scale, is a modern phenomenon; thousands of people today make their livings by persuading other people to spend their money in gambling, drinking, drug-addiction, and sensuality. Of course the use of alcohol and the other narcotics, with all the ensuing moral evils, is a relatively modern phenomenon; and no one can yet say whether or when the war against them will be successful. Many of our insidiously dangerous moral influences are of quite recent development,—such as the tabloid newspapers, the indecent revues, the novels that exploit sex.

What is going to be the effect of the widening of the chasm between rich and poor—if that is to be the tendency in the future? What is to be the effect of the increasing grip of the great financial interests upon industry, politics, the press, and other phases of our life? What is going to be done with the terrific explosives that have been invented since 1918, the devastating poison gases, and all the new instruments of war? To raise such questions is to see that moral progress is by no means certain. It is a perpetually shifting battle, with ancient codes crumbling and new codes taking shape, with new temptations arising, new forms of sin spreading, while new virtues and heroisms arise to combat them. We must run hard to keep from falling back, like the Red Queen in *Alice in Wonderland.*

The Bright Side of the Picture

But there is much that is hopeful to add to our picture. Many former evils have been definitely eliminated from human life, such as cannibalism, slavery, tortures and martyrdoms in the name of religion. In general, our practices are humaner than those of earlier days. We are probably not less cruel by nature than our ancestors; a war

still brings out the latent cruelty and blood-lust in men. But the race has trained itself to refrain, in normal circumstances, from the cruelties that have marred great stretches of human history. Much has been done by the elimination or control of hereditary autocracies and the development of representative government. Political tyranny is by no means over, as Italian Fascism and Russian "dictatorship of the Proletariat" suffice to show. And democracies can be tyrannous too; a dominant group, whether or not an actual majority, may treat harshly other groups in a democratic country. But for all that, the governments of today are probably on the whole more beneficent and less tyrannous than has been the case throughout the greater part of recorded history.

Hereditary privilege has waned with the growth of the democratic idea. The principle of human equality, given prestige by the American and French revolutions, has broken down class distinctions and opened the way for millions, who in earlier days would have had to lead a pinched and servile life, to a life of fuller self-realization. The equal status of all citizens, men and women, before the law has become the generally accepted principle. The administration of justice is more nearly impartial towards rich and poor, high and low, educated and ignorant, white and black than it has been throughout the greater part of human history. The rich everywhere have a better chance still of escaping penalties and "getting by" with anti-social conduct. But far as we are from ideal justice, we are nearer to it than past generations were.

When we turn to consider the dangerous appetites with which man is endowed, and the degree of control which he is exercising over them, our verdict is bound to be uncertain. A constant war is being waged against the curse of

alcoholism and other forms of narcosis, victories are won, defeats are suffered, and no one can foresee with any assurance what the outcome will be. But it is only quite recently that public opinion has been aroused in any considerable volume against these evils; and therefore too early to be discouraged at the tenacity with which these baneful habits persist. With respect to the sex-instinct we are probably going to see far greater laxity than our Puritan forbears, or Christian teachers in general, would countenance. Whether on the whole the greater freedom will make for a more general happiness than the suppressions of an austerer code, will be more apparent to coming generations than to us. But certainly there are grave dangers in the increasing intimacy between the sexes. Our rapidly multiplying comforts, our material prosperity, our relief from many of the dangers and difficulties that have beset human life hitherto, are bound to release much energy for play; and enjoyment based upon the sex-instinct, crude or sublimated, is sure to be increasingly sought. The human race will probably find access to more and more pleasures, in general. If properly guided and restrained, this may make for a great increase in human happiness. But self-control will always be necessary; and a wise moral education must be developed to cope with the situation.

In most fields of human activity we can welcome unreservedly the elimination of irrational restraints, of ancient taboos and prejudices, as a great moral gain. Primitive society was dominated by fear; and the moral codes of mankind have shown its impress. The growth of tolerance and individual freedom, the encouragement of variation, the liberation of life from needless fetters, is not yet fully accomplished, by any means. But the gains have been striking,

and the outlook for the future is encouraging. Morals are coming to be less rigidly uniformitarian, more plastic and adapted to individual needs. Personality can develop with less hampering, men and women—especially women—can live their own lives and find happiness for themselves and for one another with less friction from their fellows. This is a great gain in itself and of utmost promise for the future development of morals.

The great increase in wealth and leisure in recent decades, especially in America, has stimulated philanthropic enterprises to a remarkable degree. More people are interested in giving their time and money for what is called welfare work than ever before. An enormous amount of thought is being concentrated upon our social and political problems. Benefactions are not only increasing but are being directed, on the whole, more wisely. While there is, of course, considerable waste of effort and money, this spreading interest in the unfortunate, and in the welfare of the community, has already had some splendid results, and is sure to have still greater.

Most hopeful of all, perhaps, is the perceptible growth of international-mindedness. The human race has hitherto lived in pretty isolated communities. The Roman period did a great deal to break down barriers in the Mediterranean world, and its work was never wholly lost. Other empires played their part in stretching men's horizons. But only in our own day do we find anything that can fairly be called a world-consciousness. Not through the conquest of the peoples by one imperialistic nation, but through the development of a technique of working and discussing together, the peoples of the earth have at last to some degree become one, and the adventure of human life on earth proceeds

henceforth as a common enterprise. This not only brings new ideas and new interests to us all, but it bids fair eventually to break down the suspicion and hostility with which the peoples of different race, language, and tradition have usually regarded one another, and to point to a time when war will be seen for what it is, criminal fratricide.

After all, since morality is, at bottom, only common sense, it seems reasonable to believe that with the breaking down of repressive authoritative codes and ancient tyrannies, with the accumulation of knowledge, and the spread of education, men will succeed in establishing for themselves a saner and more abundant life than has yet on any large scale been realized on earth. But we have certainly not yet reached a point of safety. There is likely to be no progress unless men work for it. We must be willing to discard our present loyalties, if better ways offer themselves, just as we discard old ways of lighting, heating, or locomotion when new ways are invented. There cannot be progress without a price. We must have faith enough to give us courage and incentive, but not the sort of faith that is complacency. Perilous problems lie before us, and relatively few are awake to the perils. Our future still is in question, and the outcome rests, in part, with us.

CHAPTER XXIII

MORAL REFORM

HOWEVER optimistic we may be with respect to moral progress, we must realize that to bring it about requires our utmost effort. And the final problem which we shall consider is, What are the most promising lines of effort for furthering progress? We may classify these endeavours under three heads, educational, environmental, eugenic; and we will discuss them in reverse order.

Help from Eugenics

Eugenic progress would be the best sort of progress, if it could be achieved. Morality is a set of rules which men, for good reasons, impose upon themselves; it remains always more or less external to their natures, crossing their desires, demanding repression and conformity. Such a situation is never free from danger. Red-blooded youths are bound to be continually rebelling against its constraints; and a wave of passion, or lust, jealousy, hatred, ambition, or greed may at any time fling its shackles to the four winds. Does it not seem clear that there can be no secure morality until men are born with altered natures, with impulses and desires organically adjusted to the needs of their human situation, so that they instinctively and easily choose the right? Is not Bernard Shaw correct in saying that the only hope for a radically better life on earth is to breed a race of supermen?

But how are we to set about this task? Is it really feasible

to expect that we can breed a race of men who will be *naturally* more moral?

By the segregation of those who have pathologically vicious or criminal tendencies, so that they could have no children, something could be done in a negative way. Or, by a simple and painless operation, they could be sterilized and thus escape the necessity for segregation. This is a matter to be handled very gingerly; but if limited to cases of obvious congenital degeneracy, and put in the hands of a commission of scientifically trained experts, the danger of mistakes would be slight, and the benefit to society very great. Degenerates are often very fertile; and the flooding of the world with their offspring is a grave evil which is largely remediable. A very considerable amount of crime and vice would thus be eliminated; and as people of this pathological type are apt to be those who exploit the vicious tendencies of others for their own gain, such eugenic legislation would indirectly affect many besides those whom the laws directly concerned.

In general, any sort of eugenic measures that produce a healthier race or a brainier race will affect morals favourably. Much immorality is due to low vitality, depression of spirits, heightened cravings, lack of proper exercise, and other results of ill-health. Much immorality is due to underwittedness, stupidity, slowness or feebleness of mental reactions. But every one knows that neither health nor intellect guarantees morality. On the contrary, unless they are early and successfully enlisted in the cause of right, they may be aids to successful wickedness. The stupid and weak may oftener do wrong, but they are not clever enough or strong enough to invent wrongdoing on a great scale, or to escape detection in their petty crimes. It is the criminals

of great vitality and mental alertness who baffle our detectives, or, still worse, get into positions of power where they can mislead the people and further their selfish ends without incurring liability to punishment.

But can we not breed directly for morality, by encouraging the marriage and parenthood of the more moral people and preventing parenthood on the part of the criminal and vicious? No, this seems impracticable, for several reasons. In the first place, almost all our instincts are not in themselves bad; our potentialities of evil are also potentialities of good. An imaginative boy sees at the movies the tale of a successful crime; he imitates it, is sent to jail, and becomes a hardened criminal. But that same imagination, restlessness, inventiveness and daring, if properly utilized, might have made him a great inventor, or explorer, or aeronaut. A man shows cowardice in danger. But perhaps that is the result of an extreme sensitiveness to pain, a high-strung state of nerves, which would be a very valuable endowment for an artist or an actor. Your bad-tempered friend may be one who sees more clearly than you the faults of people and cares more passionately for his ideals; train him to patience and he may be worth ten of his apathetic neighbours. The apparently selfish man may be cherishing some purpose for the sake of which he is steeling his heart against the calls upon it; his determination, concentration of energy, single-mindedness, are rare virtues, and need only to be balanced by a clearer recognition of the rights of others. The lustful man is the man of passion, who under favourable circumstances might have become a great poet or patriot. Shall we dare to weed out of our human heritage any single instinct, and say that future generations will be better off without the potentialities which it offers?

But even if we could be sure which *traits* ought to be exterminated, we should still find it impossible to determine which *individuals* ought not to become parents. For to breed for any single trait would imply disregarding all the other traits that would inevitably be fostered or weakened by our interference. While we were carefully breeding out selfishness we might incidentally be breeding out energy, mental keenness, invention; or breeding in, say, an over-susceptibility to alcohol or to sex incitement. He that is abounding in sympathy may be lazy, shiftless, untruthful; he that is poor in that virtue may be rich in other potentialities. We are like the children in the "Birds' Christmas Carol"; he that had a necktie had no collar, and she that had shoes had no stockings. Who is competent to judge which of the concrete blendings of impulse is on the whole deserving of extinction? The problem would be as impossible of solution as that of the God who, according to the traditional conception, has to divide human beings into sheep and goats, the saved and the damned. The fact is that one person is worth saving in one respect, another in another.

The situation is further complicated by the fact that it is impossible to be sure which qualities of a man's character are inherited, and therefore transmissible to his children, and which are acquired. An irritable, ill-tempered individual, for example, whom we might doom to sterility for that fault, might be merely suffering from some organic irritation whose removal would leave him as patient and sweet-tempered as another; even if it were never removed, his children would have no unusual natural irritability. On the other hand, traits which are deep-rooted, and will be passed on from generation to generation, may be lying dormant, for

lack of the right influences to bring them out, and go unsuspected. We inherit, after all, only potentialities; and they are but dimly to be guessed through performance. The reproductive value of a man is to be measured not in terms of what he has done, but in terms of what he might have done under widely varying circumstances; it would only be by trying him out in every type of situation and under every sort of influence that we could know what is in him. All sorts of heroisms and lusts slumber in us, unknown even to ourselves; and to judge of the value of the potentialities which any given man is going to pass on to his descendants is quite beyond our powers.

Moreover, heredity is not so simple a matter as the enthusiastic eugenist is apt to assume. A child inherits the forgotten traits of a host of ancestors, and often fails to inherit the most striking of his father's or mother's traits. There are the facts of variation, and the complexities of the Mendelian law, to be borne in mind. When two people, each with a complex ancestry, marry, who can predict what the result in inherited instinct and capacity will be? A parent with a streak of insanity may bear a child who will be a genius; a parent who is a great philosopher or poet or statesman may have a son who is an idiot. We can hardly guess what strain, itself abnormal, may be of greatest value when blent with a different strain in parenthood. The mechanism of heredity is so intricate that with our present knowledge we are hardly competent to meddle with it, when it is a question of producing such a complex result as moral endowment.

Finally, the attempt to interfere with parenthood to the extent necessary to produce any appreciable changes in the instinctive endowment of future generations would not for a

moment be tolerated in our times. Would you acquiesce in enforced sterility because you have, say, a congenitally explosive temper? or because you have shown a callous selfishness in pushing under your business rivals? When we think of state interference with marriages in the interests of morality, we imagine, of course, that we personally should be selected for parenthood, while the poor unfortunates in prisons and poorhouses would be prevented from marrying. But it may well be that many of the prisoners in Sing Sing have better blood in them than you. Are you sure that if they had had your opportunities they would not have done better with them than you? or that you, under their temptations, and with their lack of good influences and training, would not have landed in Sing Sing? To a large extent crime and vice are the result, under fostering influences, of tendencies which exist in us all. And if we have had reasonably happy lives in spite of moral defects, we prefer to risk parenthood and trust to our children to get along as well or better.

Help from Euthenics

If, then, we can expect little moral progress through eugenics, cannot human nature be remoulded by remoulding the environment in which it develops? Yes, to a very considerable extent; the circumstances of human life must be so reshaped as to draw out of men what is best in them and not what is worst. Political reform, for example, is little furthered by appeals to the conscience of this individual and that; a temporary wave of zeal is soon followed by relapse into apathy and acquiescence. Such moral upheavals are of little use unless they carry on their crest some law which will make the way of the transgressor harder. The Secret Ballot and the Civil Service Laws, for example, are

doing more for good government in this year of our Lord than all the sermons and moral lessons in the world.

And so it is with most social reforms. The millennium will not come by a mere preaching of the gospel of repentance, it will come only by the patient constructing of a better social mechanism. In this the socialists are right. Their particular mechanism may not be workable, or may have disadvantages greater than its merits. But they at least have a social order to offer which minimizes the conflicts of interest among men and makes the interest of the individual coincide, to a greater extent than is now the case, with the interests of the group to which he belongs. It is, therefore, not enough to criticize socialism, to point out its difficulties and dangers; the critic must have an alternative plan to suggest, which will work better. For it is clear that our present economic and political order to a very large extent fosters our worst tendencies and turns men into hard, ruthless, selfish beings.

It is highly undesirable, however, as we saw in an earlier chapter, to attempt—except in the most desperate cases—too abrupt and revolutionary changes in the economic or political mechanism. The better way, wherever it is not made impossible by tenacious and uncompromising upholders of the *status quo,* is to move step by step, dealing with difficulties as they arise, bewaring of so upsetting existing institutions as to lose their existing values or to provoke reaction, but keeping our eyes steadily on the vision of a better order. Prohibitory legislation has its rightful place, as in dealing with the various forms of commercialized vice. But we must be wary of prohibiting what is not clearly a great menace to the community. In general, what is called welfare-legislation, legislation that confers positive benefits

upon people, is to be preferred. And beyond the scope of the law, welfare-work by voluntary organizations has a vast field for ameliorating the conditions of life and thus developing more wholesome moral attitudes.

Help Through Education

But in order to get either proper eugenic legislation, or proper changes effected in the environment, we must educate people to see existing evils, to want to correct them, and to understand how they can best be corrected. Public opinion is the basic power in a democracy, and public opinion is the product of education. So, though education alone is not enough, it is the necessary preliminary to reform of every sort. And the most important question before the world is, in generalized terms, how we can instil into our citizens moral idealism and moral intelligence.

In our western world, since the nominal acceptance of Christianity, moral education has been considered the province of the Church. And though it is only individuals and relatively small groups who have ever consistently practised the Christian way of life, the effect of Christian preaching has undoubtedly mitigated to a considerable extent the natural selfishness and sensuality of man. What is important, however, is not to estimate correctly the past services of the Church, but to determine what we have reason to expect of the Church in the future. After nearly two thousand years of Christian preaching, men are no better than they are. Can we suppose that the Church will ever do much more than it has done to moralize men? Is it even, perhaps, losing its influence and so becoming likely to accomplish less in the future than in the past?

There does seem to be, in a few of the more intelligent

churches, a real awakening to the possibilities that lie in the use of modern psychological and pedagogical knowledge. And pulpit-preaching, in these liberal churches, is concerning itself less and less with theological doctrines and exegesis of Bible texts, and more and more with moral problems. But after all, the churches reach only a minority of the population, and for but an hour and a half, or, at best, two or three hours a week. Most of their moral exhortation is still traditionalistic, stereotyped platitude, that does not penetrate very deep into the real moral issues of the day. The homilies of the preachers are largely discounted; it is their job to exhort; the actual perplexing, tangled, difficult problems of living are seldom taken up and treated in a free and illuminating manner. The burden of this book is that we are gradually working out a *better* moral code than men have hitherto held; and the Christian churches seldom offer us leadership in this momentous undertaking.

As for the less liberal churches, their influence, though steadying as to some of the basic duties of men, is mostly against the development of a saner and more wholesome moral life. And their moralizing work is continually distracted and confused by their theological interests. Being primarily institutions for the preservation of certain cosmic and historic beliefs, and certain rites or sacraments which these beliefs involve, they are not able to study human life and human needs with any freedom. They do foster moral zeal, which may, by good fortune, crystallize into a movement for some really needed reform, as in the case of the anti-saloon campaign. But most of the important moral reforms, such as the abolition of slavery a generation ago, or the war against war today, find the churches divided and ineffective.

The most important moral influence is, of course, that of parents upon children in the home. But the parents in the homes are just the ordinary men and women of today; and before they can be led to give their children moral intelligence they must become morally intelligent themselves.

Something may be done through the various clubs and fraternal or civic organizations of our day. Specific evils may be attacked and specific reforms pushed by Rotary Clubs, Chambers of Commerce, Trade Unions, Masons, Knights of Columbus, men's clubs, women's clubs, of all sorts. A great deal can be done by professional organizations, by adopting codes for the guidance of their members. Already associations of doctors, lawyers, and various groups of business men, have adopted elaborate codes which brand certain practices as dishonourable and disgraceful, while setting up positive maxims for professional behaviour. We shall see a great deal more of this sort of thing in the years to come, and its effect should be salutary.

But the main work of moral education must be done by the schools. The schools alone reach the whole population. Practically all our boys and girls are in school five days a week for a large part of each year until they are fourteen. Our more progressive States now hold them in some sort of continuation school till they are eighteen. And a rapidly increasing number are going on to high school and college. Here, then, is the place to reach our people, while they are still young and plastic, and to awaken them to the importance of moral intelligence. Here we can be free from the burden of sectarian religious dogmas, here we have teachers and pupils from every race and social stratum in the land, with every sort of moral background and representing every

moral need. Here we have, obviously, the greatest opportunity to shape the men and women of the future.

Moral education on any considerable scale, and in any intelligent way, is still in its infancy in our schools. The trouble, perhaps, is not the existence of any widespread opposition to it, but the inherent difficulty of the undertaking and the tardiness with which our educational experts have worked out the appropriate technique. However that may be, the fact is that, in most of our States, we are not yet trying on any large and systematic scale to provide competent training in the art of life for our youth. We employ experts to teach them Latin and mathematics; we see to it that they know how to build bridges properly if they are to be engineers, or fill teeth properly if they are to be dentists. But we leave the most important training of all, the training that shall show them how to guide their desires and instincts, how to avoid the snares and pitfalls of life, how to be steadily and honourably happy, how to contribute their share of effort for the common welfare, to the haphazard attention of parents, who are for the most part themselves ill-trained and ignorant of how to live. We need not despair of the efficacy of moral training, for we have hardly begun to try it.

What if our school superintendents and college presidents were to recognize that the prime function of education is to form right habits of conduct, to awaken ardent devotion to moral ideals, to develop the attitude of moral thoughtfulness and build up a fund of moral intelligence? What if our schools were to focus the attention of their pupils upon the discussion of concrete problems of conduct, to help them to formulate their own codes and to foster in them loyalty to these codes? In mediæval Europe certain upper class boys were trained to a code of knighthood, a code of courage,

chastity, and eager service. In Japan the youths of the Samurai class were trained, with admirable success, to a somewhat similar code. Why should we not develop an American code, more complex, more generous to individual interest and need, but with compulsive power to turn us away from the grosser stupidities of human conduct and to enlist us all in the service of the common weal?

In one respect the coming generation has a great advantage. The girls of today are learning to use their brains as well as the boys. The educated have never been more than a very small percentage of the people. Now the available resources for leadership are doubled. The graduates of our women's colleges are doing their share of pioneering; if they are losing the docility which it has been customary to expect from women, it is a hopeful sign. Perhaps they will right some of the wrongs of our man-made world.

It is encouraging, too, to remember that man is scarcely more than at the dawn of his life on earth. He must plan for the millions of years that seem to lie ahead; he must be bound no longer by the limitations of the moral ideas of his childhood. The patriarchal morality of the Old Testament, the interim ethics of the New Testament writers who lived in expectation of the imminent end of the existing Order, contain much that is of the greatest value for us and for the future. But a highly industrialized world, with vast aggregates of capital, and a network of international relations, brings new opportunities for sin and new moral imperatives. Science has given man enormous powers for good and ill; our morality must keep pace with the new forms of exploitation, of injustice, of unfair privilege, of destructiveness, which science has rendered possible. Whether we like it or not,

The Old Order changeth, yielding place to new.

Let us at least understand what morality is about, let us agree as to the goal we are trying to reach. Hitherto men have been plodding for the most part in the dark, following a few familiar and trusted voices, but not seeing clearly whither they were going. Light dawned for a few, here and there at fortunate moments in human history; but only now is daybreak coming for great numbers of men. The light shows us that we have not always been on the right road; and if it offers to some the temptation to stray this way and that in pleasant paths, at least it is an enormous gain that the great Moral Adventure of man is to go on henceforth in the light.

THE END

GTU Library
2400 Ridge Road
Berkeley, CA 94709
For renewals call (510) 649-2509
All items are subject to recall